

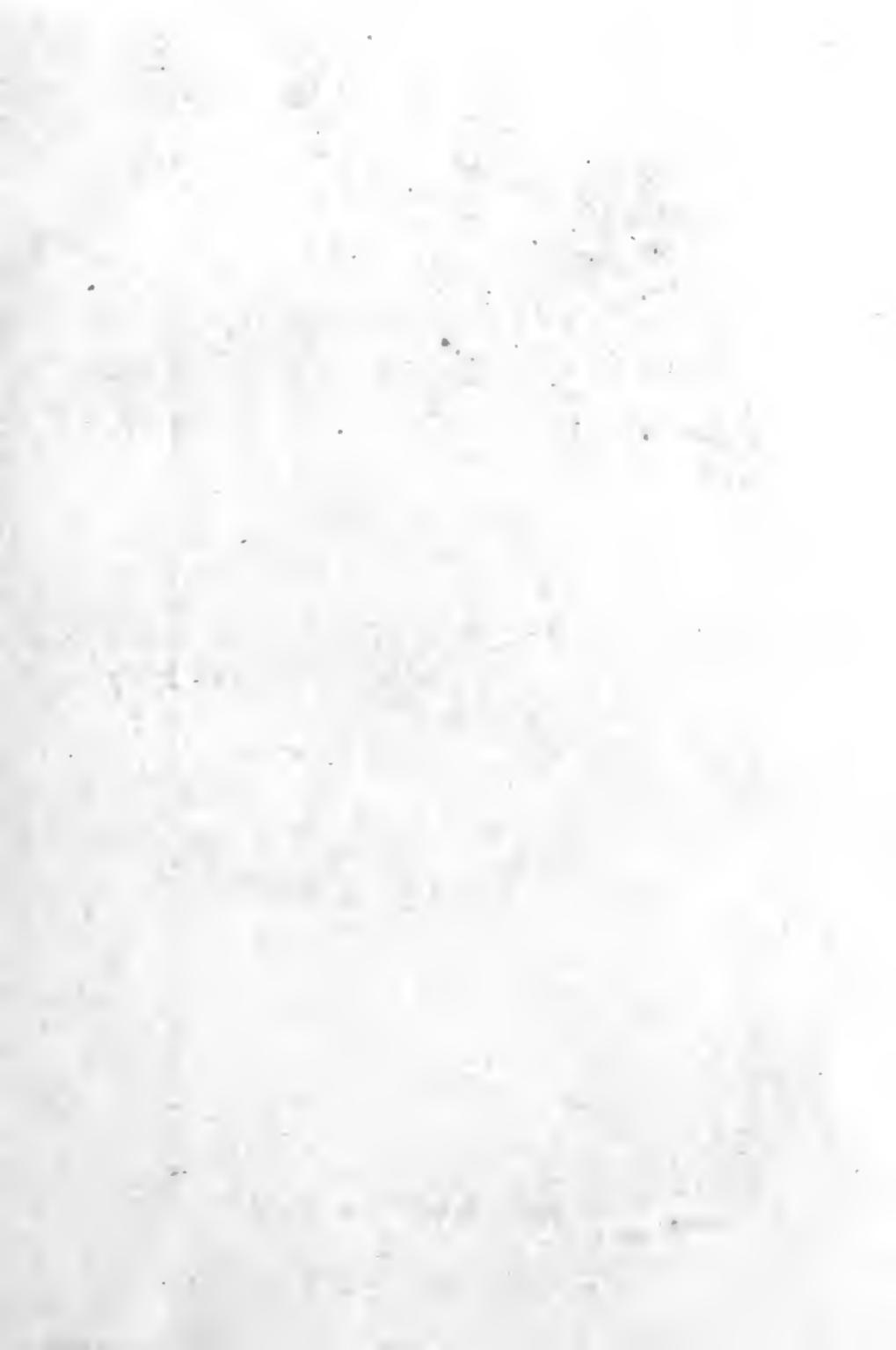
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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
CENTRAL AMERICA
BY
MRS. FOOTE.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



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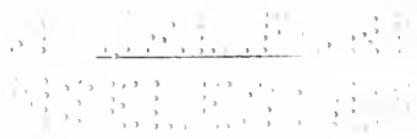




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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
CENTRAL AMERICA
AND THE
WEST COAST OF AFRICA.
BY
MRS. FOOTE,
WIDOW OF THE LATE
HENRY GRANT FOOTE, Esq.,

Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Lagos.



T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, Publisher, 30, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square.

1869.

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Henry Stevens

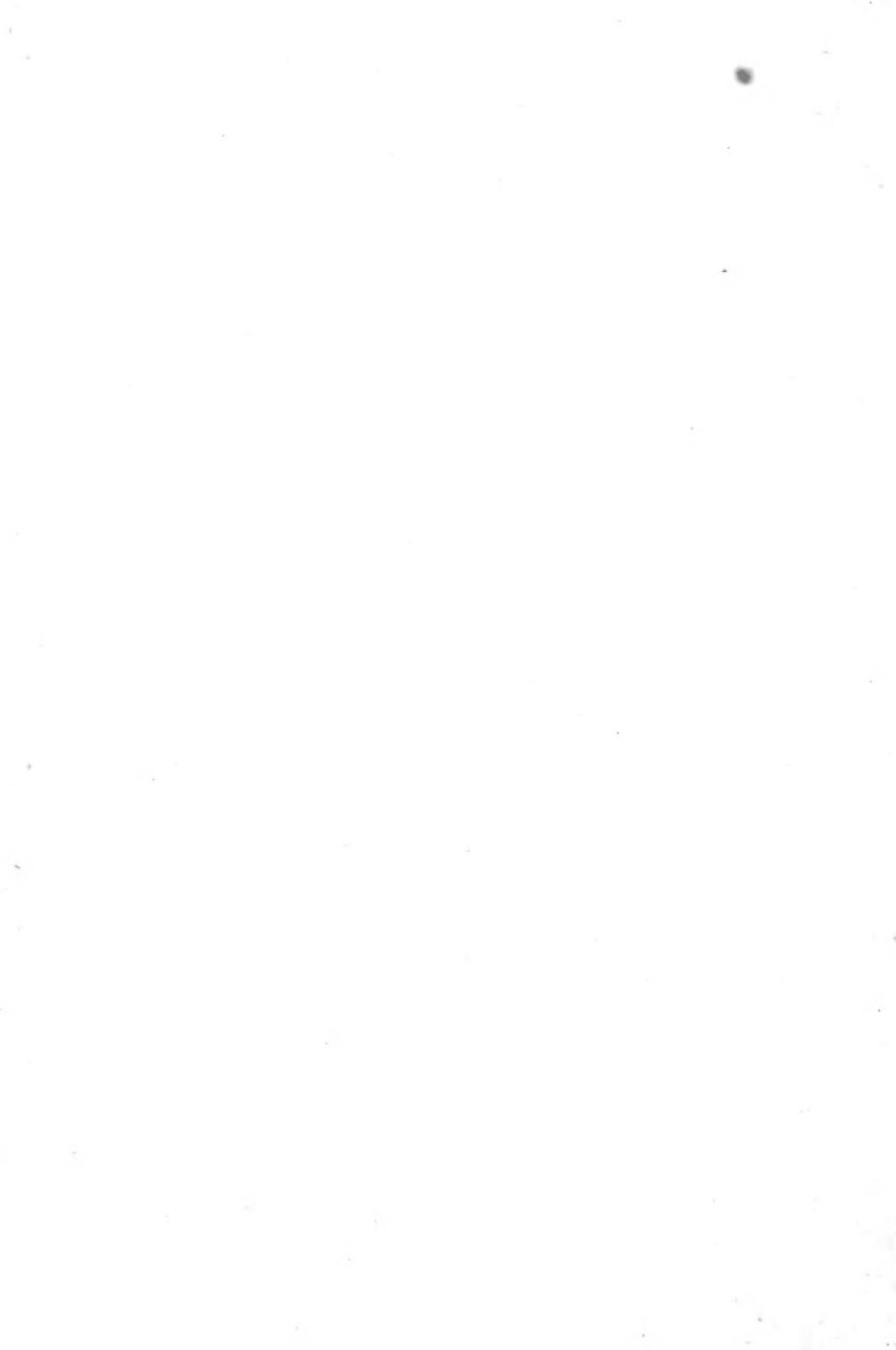
ERRATA.

PAGE.

- 65 For "on the morning of 16th April," read "on the night, &c."
- 71 For "Tree Cotton," read "Cotton Tree."
- 78 For "It seemed I was several minutes," read "It seemed I was several seconds."

1870
London

P A R T I.



RECOLLECTIONS OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER a residence of upwards of eighteen months in Greytown, or San Juan del Norte, in which place my husband held an official appointment, he was removed to the neighbouring state of Salvador; and on the 3rd September, 1853, we started on our long and toilsome, though interesting, journey.

Perhaps a short description of this bustling, but little-known seaport of Nicaragua, or Grey-

town as more commonly called, may not be out of place.

At the time I was residing there it could boast of one of the finest harbours in the world—a narrow, but deep passage being the only inlet into the broad expanse of water which washed its low, swampy shores.

Large men-of-war, and deeply laden merchant ships could lie safely at anchor within hail of land; and however much the great rolling waves of the Atlantic might be raging outside, the harbour preserved its same calm aspect.

Greytown is built on a loose, sandy soil; but on account of the deluges of rain, which last more or less, nine months of the year, it is extremely fertile, the grass growing nearly down to the water's edge. The houses are all built of wood; and groups of trees have been left here and there, giving a pretty appearance to the little town, when seen from the water. Most of these white-washed buildings have green verandahs and

porticoes, but are built too slightly and hastily to have much pretension to beauty.

The inhabitants are principally Americans ; but there is a sprinkling of Europeans, and the lower orders are nearly entirely composed of Nicaraguans, and Jamaica negroes.

In consequence of this mixture of nationalities, there were a great many days to be observed in the course of the year. The Americans had their Fourth of July, the Nicaraguans their "Dia de Independencia," the Jamaica negroes the anniversary of the day they became free men, and last, though not least, the English had their Twenty-fourth of May, when a royal salute was fired, and the British flag floated over the piazza.

I must not let our Queen's birthday pass without mentioning an amusing serenade given by the black men, beneath our windows, at midnight.

After giving three cheers for the Queen, the

loyal Jamaicans struck up a most dismal howl, meant to be “God save the Queen,” in which they swore Her Majesty should “nebber, nebber be a slave,” making a medley of “Rule Britannia” and the National Anthem.

On first arriving at Greytown I could scarcely sleep from the noise at night of the insects, which in that burning climate are almost as numerous as the leaves of the forest.

The tree cockroach, especially, makes a sound so loud and shrill, that it can be heard at an immense distance. The frogs, also, during the rainy season, are great disturbers throughout the night, keeping up an incessant croaking, in which the loud, hoarse voice of the bull frog is prominent.

Snakes, wild boars, and tiger cats abound in the forests at the back of the town, which are intersected by numerous small but beautiful lagoons, whose banks are clothed with beautiful trees and flowering creepers. Amongst the

former the graceful tamarinds and fan-like cocoa-nuts were my favourites.

The lovely lakes swarm with alligators, huge, slimy monsters, smelling horribly of musk, and looking, when lying half out of the water, like trunks of fallen trees.

Sea and fresh-water fish are also to be found in the lagoons, and our favourite recreation was a paddle on the still waters in our canoe at sunset, where beneath the shade of some towering tamarind tree we fished, or attempted to fish, listening to the chattering of the monkeys overhead, and the wild cry of the parrots and macaws, disturbed by our near approach.

One of these lagoons is exquisitely beautiful, being completely embosomed in palm trees, which here grow to a size I never saw elsewhere. Not a speck of sun ever visits its still waters, and all around seems tinged with green from the meeting of branches overhead.

Everything sounds musical on such a spot—

the cry of the birds, the splash of the oar, even the lowered tones of the human voice, and the solitude is so profound that a feeling of solemnity steals into the mind of the most light-hearted.

The costume of the Nicaraguan women is very pretty. My astonishment was great when I first made the acquaintance of my laundress, a pretty young woman, with an exquisite figure, all dressed in white muslin and gold spangles.

The loose body, or rather chemisette, of her dress was separate from her skirt, and cut low on the neck, with short furbelowed sleeves, and richly trimmed with gold spangles. The skirt was also glittering with the same ornaments, and gave to view a foot and ankle of beautiful proportions. A *rebosa*, or scarf, of coloured cotton, with a deep fringe, completed her costume.

A vision of English washerwomen floated in my mind as I looked on her, and the remembrance was not flattering to my national pride.

This magnificent damsel charged no less than three dollars a dozen for washing, and this was considered a reasonable price for Greytown, many requiring five dollars, equal to one pound British money.

I have heard of some reckless bachelors who were in the custom of throwing away their minor articles of clothing after one wear, finding it cheaper to buy new ones to having them washed at this rate.

Provisions are also an enormous price in Greytown—fourpence for one egg, four shillings for a lean fowl, and wretched meat at a shilling per pound. Fruit and vegetables are also scarce and dear, a dreadful privation in the tropics, where they are not luxuries, but necessities of life.

The cause of the excessive price of everything was the fortnightly influx of Californians, who, at the time I speak of, made Greytown their route to and from California.

In consequence of the bad management of the transit company these people were often delayed in the town for want of river steamers to convey them up the San Juan, and their numbers caused a perfect famine in the land.

Provisions rose on these occasions to a fabulous price, and were often unattainable at any, the consequence of which was many fell victims to want of proper food and accommodation.

The immense quantity of preserved meat consumed in Greytown was something marvellous. One Yankee speculator entirely roofed his house with the tin plates of meat cans, which used to shine in the sun like glass. The heat of such a metal covering may be imagined near the equator.

The opening of the Panama Railroad was the destruction of the prosperity of Greytown, the travellers to and from California preferring that less troublesome route to the two seas. The beautiful harbour of Greytown has also in late years been shut out to vessels of large tonnage,

by a shifting sand bank, which has narrowed the passage from the sea through which they used to enter without difficulty.

On the 3rd September, 1853, we bade adieu to the swampy shores of Greytown, or San Juan del Norte, as the natives call it, and started on our long journey to the neighbouring state of San Salvador. Strange as it may seem, I could not help feeling a pang of regret as we stepped on board the little steamer which was to bear us to another home, and I suppose there is no place in the world, however disagreeable, where we do not feel something like this after any lengthened sojourn. My regret at parting from our old house was a little lessened, however, by severe symptoms of fever which had declared themselves a few days before our departure, and I felt how necessary it was both for my husband and myself to have complete change of air, after an eighteen months' residence in one of the most unhealthy spots in the world.

Our fellow-travellers were the new American Minister for Nicaragua, his secretary of legation, and the American Consul of Greytown. The Minister had arrived in Greytown a few days before we intended leaving, and one of the American Company's steamers being placed at his disposal, he kindly asked us to share it with him, we thereby escaping the misery of a passage by one of the ordinary steamers, which were always crowded to suffocation.

These small river steamers are very peculiar in their construction—long and narrow, with the paddle-wheel behind, to allow of the vessel threading its way up the tortuous river San Juan. The scenery, which, around Greytown is low and uninteresting, improved as we ascended, and beautiful trees of every form, and various shades of green, dipped their branches into the river. The most remarkable of these were the feathery cocoanuts, the eboe, with its purple blossoms, from which the Indian belles extract an oil for the hair, the

palm, and the majestic tamarind, but their beauty was much marred by the thick under-growth of trees, and rank vegetation of parasites.

On Sunday morning we arrived at the Castilleo Rapids. The small town consists of about fifty miserable houses, and an old Spanish fort, falling to decay, but occupying a commanding position on the summit of the hill. The only interest attaching to it is, that it was the scene of one of Nelson's early exploits. An unfortunate lieutenant and a few soldiers keep guard in this dismal residence, and afforded me an opportunity of admiring the uniform of the gallant defenders of Nicaragua. It consists simply of a shirt, anything but white, displaying the arms *al fresco*, trousers with a blue stripe, and any description of hat or cap which the fancy of the wearer may suggest. We were obliged to stay a day at the Castilleo, as there was no steamer ready to take us on before the next morning.

We found tolerably comfortable quarters at an inn, kept by a German and his wife, but our slumbers were somewhat disturbed by the dancing and fiddling kept up in honour of the arrival of the American Minister.

The following morning we pursued our voyage in a small and uncomfortable little steamer. Three cheers were given us by the few assembled inhabitants at parting, and an American flag, nearly as large as the town itself, waved gaily in the fresh breeze, and I daresay warmed the hearts of our fellow-travellers, for few things give such a thrill of pleasure in a foreign country as the sight of the flag that we love, recalling home, and loving faces, and old familiar scenes.

The river widened considerably as we approached the Lake of Granada; and here we embarked on board the "Ornatepe," a large and commodious steamer, with excellent accommodation, and a most obliging commander. We soon arrived at Fort San Carlos, another

miserable collection of huts, at the entrance of the lake, with its "Commandante" and dozen soldiers. Mr. B—— and suite went on shore to pay an official visit; but Henry and myself did not think the place sufficiently inviting to take the trouble to accompany them, and so we remained on board, enjoying the delicious, cool evening breeze.

In about an hour we were again cutting our way through the clear lake, which is a magnificent sheet of water, blue as the sky above, and studded with beautiful volcanic islands. Before nightfall we came in sight of the largest of these, Ornatepe, and its sister island, Madeira, and at mid-night we dropped anchor in Virgin Bay, a place which will ever be held in abhorrence by the unfortunate mosquito-bitten passengers of the "Ornatepe." Never before had I suffered so much from the attacks of these formidable enemies, and the heavy eyes and cross looks of our fellow-passen-

gers showed that they had not fared better. The fresh morning breeze, however, and the knowledge that in a few hours we should be in Granada soon restored our spirits, and Henry and Mr B. amused themselves by quizzing the appearance of the rising town of Virgin Bay, to the great disgust of some of the Americans present, for the citizens of the vainest nation in the world pride themselves most particularly upon the facility with which they build up their wooden towns.

The little town of Virgin Bay consists of a collection of small houses, principally constructed of wood, but neatly painted and whitewashed, gleaming on the side of a sloping hill. The situation is certainly very beautiful, with the calm clear lake at its base, and the blue mountains of Ornatepe almost directly opposite. The usual "Deputation of American Citizens" came off to pay their respects to their minister, and armed, of course, with many complaints, which

they considered it his bounden duty immediately to redress.

Virgin Bay is a short cut to the Pacific, and a few miles on horseback over very bad roads, will, I believe, take the traveller to San Juan del Sul, which lies nearly opposite, on the Pacific side. This was the favourite route to California until the completion of the Panama railway.

In a short time we were again on our way, and at four o'clock anchored in sight of Granada, the first Spanish town on the lake. We immediately landed, glad to be once more on *terra firma*, for however comfortable a ship may be, it is still but a floating prison, and in a tropical climate about the hottest prison you can be in. Henry and myself were most kindly received at the house of a German merchant, who fortunately spoke English very well. We spent a pleasant week at Granada, which is considered the first commercial town of the state of Nicaragua. To an European eye, accustomed to houses of three

and four stories in height, those of Granada appear insignificant, as they are all built long and low on account of the frequent earthquakes, but this impression is dispelled on entering the courtyard, open to the sky, and surrounded by large, lofty, well-furnished rooms. In every bed-room a grass hammock is slung, inviting the lazy to repose, and making even the most active incline to indulge in the *dolce far niente* of life.

We took several charming rides about the environs of Granada, which are exceedingly pretty, the blue lake forming an exquisite foreground to waving woods, for ever green.

During our stay, my husband was invited to a banquet, given by the authorities of Granada to the American Minister, at which the speech of one of the notabilities present particularly struck him as indicative of the unsettled state of the Nicaraguan mind at that epoch. On rising to return thanks for the toast of "Nicaragua," this gentleman expressed his fervent hope "that in a short

time the state of Nicaragua might form one of the brightest stars in the glorious flag of the United States;" a hope that the notorious Walker subsequently endeavoured to fulfil.

On the 1st of September everything was arranged for our departure, and we and the American minister agreed to form one party; but the Fates had ordained it otherwise. Everyone in Granada advised us to try mules instead of horses, as the roads at this season were very heavy. We consented to do so, though I have always had an inveterate dislike to those most self-willed of animals. At four o'clock we were ready to start, the three baggage mules having been sent on in advance. Several friends accompanied us, and we formed quite a large cavalcade through the streets of Granada. Before we had proceeded more than a mile, I began to entertain doubts of my mule; he shied at all the pigs and chickens, which in Granada pick up a scanty living in the streets, and as soon as he got into

the open country, he fairly ran away with me into the bushes. Henry insisted on my dismounting and trying his mule, which was of rather a more amiable disposition, while he jumped on the back of mine, imagining that a man's strength would soon conquer his refractory spirit; but the contest ended in the creature breaking the strong iron bit between his teeth, so we determined to return to the town, and exchange our mules for horses.

We had scarcely reached our friend's house when the truth of those words, "whatever is, is best," was forcibly proved to us by a fearful thunderstorm bursting over our heads, accompanied by a deluge of rain, to all of which we should have been exposed but for my uncompromising mule. We thought with commiseration of our poor fellow travellers who had continued their journey, and were, therefore, in the midst of the down pour.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, we again made

a start, having procured two docile, but spirited little horses, whose easy "andar" made riding no fatigue. Several gentlemen of Granada accompanied us as far as Masaga, a large Indian town six leagues from Granada, very prettily situated in the midst of fruit trees. The roads were fearfully muddy, and our horses often sank above their knees, but we were a merry party, notwithstanding all difficulties, and arrived without accident at our first resting place.

Masaga boasts of two or three posadas and about half a dozen churches, and is famous for the manufacture of straw mats, which in this hot climate are an excellent substitute for carpets. They are exceedingly fine in texture, and either entirely white, or ornamented with squares of black and red alternately, the effect of which is very pretty. They are not over durable, however, seldom lasting more than a year, but their price is low. They are entirely manufactured by the Indians, who seem to be extremely expert

with their hands. Their carved bowls, made from the tree gourds, are beautiful and curious, considering the only tool employed is a common pen-knife.

Henry, who had been much in the East, was struck by the great resemblance the Indians of Central America bear to the Malays, the features, hair, and colour of skin, being precisely similar.

The fame of our arrival soon spread through the town, and presently the posada was besieged by a motley crowd, all anxious to get a peep at the "estrangeros."

Several children with whooping-cough were brought to me to cure, the poor Indians imagining that all foreigners must have a knowledge of the healing art. I took out my homœopathic box and dosed them with sundry globules of belladonna, much to the awe and astonishment of the assembled mothers, who seemed to expect that some miracle was about to be performed. After a time the crowd dispersed, and we enjoyed a night's refreshing rest after our long ride.

CHAPTER II.

IN the morning we proceeded on our journey to Managna, a distance of eight leagues. The country through which we passed was most beautiful—a perfect wilderness of trees and flowers, often reminding me of Devonshire in its fertile loveliness and rich red soil. What a pity that such an exquisite country should be allowed to run to waste ! Often for several leagues there was not a sign of any living thing, except the wild forest birds overhead. It seemed strange even to hear our own voices in this

beautiful solitude, and I thought Milton must have imagined such a scene when he wrote his "Comus."

A short way from Managna a strange sight met our view. A whole valley lay before us, one mass of black lava, looking like an immense ploughed field.

This eruption must have occurred many years ago, and the volcano is now considered extinct, but not the less dangerous, perhaps, for its hidden fires.

In the afternoon we arrived at Managna, the seat of the Government (or mis-government rather), of the State of Nicaragua. We rode up to the principal hotel, and there met once more with our fellow-travellers who had come to their journey's end, and gave us a most laughable account of their adventures since we parted.

Mr. B— congratulated us that we had escaped that dreadful night when his horse had rolled with him in the mud three times.

The rain commenced almost directly after our arrival, so we had no chance of seeing anything of the town, but as far as we could judge from the windows of the hotel, it was poor enough. I reclined in the large hammock all the evening, rather tired after my two days' journey, while the gentlemen sat around talking and smoking, that delightful resource, and perhaps the cause of the idleness in which men and women equally indulge in this country. The unusual sight of so many foreigners of course drew a crowd to the doors, so much so, indeed, that we were often forced to close them.

Next morning we bade adieu with much regret to our American friends, as we were in a hurry to get to our journey's end, the rains increasing in violence every day. The scenery continued most beautiful with tantalizing glimpses of the lake of Managna meeting us at every turn of the road, and I regretted much not having time to get a nearer view. At three o'clock we arrived at Matrarez

—a wretched little Indian village with one poor posada. The rain was coming down in torrents, or I think we should have proceeded, so great was Henry's disgust at the dirt and discomfort of everything.

After a sleepless night, we were ready for a start by day-break, and the sweet morning air refreshed us, for nothing can be more delicious than the first three hours of the day in the rainy season. The sun rises brilliantly, with scarcely a cloud to be seen in the sky, while the rain of the previous night has given an exquisite coolness and lightness to the clear atmosphere. At eight the sun becomes oppressively hot, and heavy clouds are seen looming in the distance, fortelling the deluge that will follow at three o'clock.

After passing through one pretty Indian village, called Nagarote, full of magnificent trees, we arrived at our next resting place—a charmingly situated little town inhabited principally

by Indians, and bearing a very indifferent character for honesty throughout the State—but we had no reason to complain of Puebla Nueva, as we found more comfortable quarters than we had yet met with in Nicaragua, always excepting Granada. The posada was kept by a nice old widow, with a large family of pretty daughters ; it was delightfully clean, and everything about the place showed a refinement rarely to be met with in Nicaragua. I felt quite ready for another eight leagues ride after, I believe, about *twelve* hours sleep, and though it has been said that no one should sleep more than eight hours at a time, I wish the hard-hearted wretch who uttered the rash opinion could travel in Central America in the rainy season.

A wayside cross attracted our attention just on the outskirts of Puebla Nueva, and on enquiry, we found it was the spot where an unfortunate English merchant captain had been murdered a year before. He was taking a quiet walk, when

a dozen men rushed out upon him from the neighbouring wood, robbed him of everything he possessed, and after hacking him cruelly with their *machetes* (a kind of bowie knife with which every Indian goes armed), left him for dead; the man who drove the cart containing his luggage and pistols was unfortunately in advance, but getting alarmed at his non-appearance, returned in search of him, and bore him to the next village, where he shortly expired. How sad, yet beautiful, is the appearance of these way-side crosses, with their chaplets of fresh flowers, generally to be met with in the most lonely forest roads, and in spots where one would imagine a thought of evil could never be harboured.

The roads between Puebla Nueva and Leon are very good, and we made the eight leagues at the rate of six miles an hour, which is very well for Central American travelling. The two last leagues of our journey were excessively hot, as

the neighbourhood of Leon is more destitute of trees than any other part of Nicaragua that we had seen. We were glad after our fatiguing ride to find ourselves comfortably housed in a beautiful English-looking room, with curtained windows, and easy-chairs in abundance. The owner of this mansion—an English merchant, long resident in the country—was absent ; but we were most kindly welcomed by his wife and sister.

We stayed a week in this dull, old cathedral town, in the hope of hearing of some vessel leaving the seaport of Realejo for La Union, in San Salvador. Leon is so like an old cathedral town in England in its venerable dullness, that had it not been for the dark faces and strange costumes of the inhabitants, I could have fancied myself once more in Salisbury or Exeter. Nothing to me is so dispiriting as a dull town. I can enjoy the deep solitude of the forest, feel rapture in a wild

mountain path, or on a lonely sea-shore, and there is no music so sweet to my ears as the rush of the waves, or the whisper of the trees ; but, a dull town is the worst of all solitudes. Leon can boast of rather a fine cathedral, it being a massive stone edifice, in better repair than most of the Central American churches ; but not to be named with the Roman Catholic cathedrals of Europe. It is entirely destitute of fine carving and pictures, while the ornaments used in adorning the altars are mean and tawdry. We ascended the tower by a winding stair, to have a view of the surrounding country, which is certainly very beautiful, and almost repaid one for mounting so many stairs—no light feat in a tropical climate.

After waiting in vain to hear of some chance of proceeding by sea, we determined to ride to Chinandega—a prettily situated town twelve miles from Leon. Miss M—— agreed to accompany us, her brother having a house at

Chinandega, where she kindly asked us to lodge. The horses we procured at Leon were most miserable animals, but no better were to be had; mine was a perfect Rosinante, and excited peals of laughter whenever I tried to put him into a gallop, from the extraordinary method he had of kicking out one leg behind, trying apparently to make it do double duty. We passed through a lonely fertile country; but the roads, being very flat, were in a dreadful state from the heavy rains that had fallen. After passing through several deep places converted into rivers, we arrived at Chinandega, completely exhausted with the exertion of urging on our wretched horses, which seemed ready to drop at every step.

Chinandega is completely surrounded by fruit trees; oranges and mangoes predominate, and there must be lovely rides in the neighbourhood as the roads are level and well kept, for Nicaragua. There is only one English lady in the town, who, poor thing, must be lonely enough; from her and

her husband we received every kind attention during our week's stay.

As no ship was heard of, we determined to proceed by the Gulf of Fonseca to La Union, a far more fatiguing route, but I was not sorry to escape a sea voyage in a wretched sailing vessel, particularly as it gave me an opportunity of seeing the country.

We now bade adieu to horseback travelling for a time, as the six leagues between Chinandega and Tampisqui, our place of embarkation, were pronounced impassable, even for a mule, and an ox cart was the only alternative. All the old ladies of Nicaragua make use of these primitive vehicles in the rainy season, and really they are well suited for the roads of mud and water, mingled with huge stones, which we had to encounter on our way. No words can describe the awful jolting to which we were victims for the next four hours, plunging down into bogs which fairly buried the wheels, then up again over

stones which the depth of the water had concealed. We were at last too tired even to laugh, and arrived at the river Tampisqui quite worn out.

We found there our bungo, a large boat covered with an awning of palm leaves and hides, waiting for us with its crew of four Indians. The stream where we embarked was most uninteresting, being remarkable for nothing but its swarms of sand flies, little venomous creatures far worse than mosquitoes. We breakfasted seated on a log of wood during a furious onslaught of our enemies, and after a wearisome delay of an hour found ourselves in the bungo where we were to pass the night.

Before sunset we reached the Gulf of Fonseca which is very beautiful, with several picturesque islands scattered over it. We were fortunate in having very fine weather until night, when a slight shower fell, and then our bungo miseries

commenced, for the Indians who dislike rain as much as any cat, immediately covered the boat with thick hides which excluded every breath of air; I awoke in the night gasping and found Henry in the same condition, so we frantically called out for air to the sleeping Indians who were apparently perfectly indifferent to that necessary of life, and they slowly and reluctantly unfastened the hides.

How delicious it was, that first breath of pure night air to my parched throat. Henry and I sat out at the stern of the boat till dawn of day when we again laid ourselves down to try to get a little sleep, and the Indians once more bent to their oars, singing their wild melancholy songs, which mingled strangely with my half waking dreams. I felt so ill all the next day that I could scarcely raise my head from the pillow; the heat was intense and the glare from the sparkling water so intolerable to my aching brain that I did not

revive at all until the evening, when the news that we were approaching the port of La Union acted like magic on me.

The Indians wished to drop anchor for the night some way off the entrance of the harbour, but by the promise of something additional if they proceeded, we at last found ourselves at eight o'clock in the evening at the landing place. There arose a violent wind with dark heavy clouds, which every moment threatened us with a deluge, but we were determined to land, so in the midst of darkness and a driving wind we first set foot on the shores of Salvador. We arrived at the posada just in time to escape the rain, and what a luxury it was to have plenty of space and fresh air, after the horrible bungo.

The town of La Union is prettily situated, commanding an extensive view of the mountains of Honduras, and the lovely blue Gulf of Fonseca. At the time we were there, the town did not

possess more than half a dozen good houses, but it has wonderfully increased during the last few years, and is rapidly becoming one of the busiest and most prosperous towns on the coast. Unfortunately it has a bad name for fevers, which are more fatal on the sea coast than they are inland, a peculiarity of all tropical countries.

There were two or three English, and about as many Americans, living there when we arrived, and they of course found us out at once, for anyone speaking the English language in Central America is looked upon as a Godsend by the poor sons of old England, and still more so by the Americans, who are worse linguists even than the French.

Mr. Squires, the author of an amusing and clever work on Central America was one of our constant visitors during the two days we were there, and he seemed to forget that we belonged to that hated England which is continually the

theme of his animadversions. English and Americans may abuse each other and quarrel in print, but it is wonderful how all this changes when they meet in a strange country where the dear accents of the English tongue are seldom heard. Petty jealousy and enmities are then forgotten, while they only remember that they descended from the same noble stock.

After remaining two days to recruit, we procured a couple of horses and three baggage mules and proceeded on our journey. Mr. Squires accompanied us a few miles out of the town, this being a Central American mark of courtesy, and then bade us adieu with many a warning of the terrible roads we should encounter.

CHAPTER III.

THE roads were in truth much more hilly and stony than any we had yet passed, and we made in consequence but slow progress. At about twelve o'clock we reached a pretty little village where we stopped to breakfast. The posada and everything about it was remarkably clean, and the owner of it, who was the Alcalde, or magistrate of the place gave Henry another horse in exchange for the one he brought from La Union, which was a wretched animal—slow and insecure.

After resting myself for an hour in the nice

clean hammock we proceeded on our journey, much refreshed by the delicious coffee and fresh eggs, two luxuries always obtainable in the poorest houses in Central America. Mr. Squires had warned us of the mud we should have to encounter between this village and San Miguel; but it almost exceeded his description, and at one place in particular I really thought our horses would have sunk altogether.

It was a wild, desolate-looking plain on the crown of a hill; myriads of locusts were flying, over it, darkening the air, and leaving a wasted country behind them, for these destructive insects eat up every green leaf they can find; they whizzed past my ears, and flapped against my face in the most disagreeable manner, while my poor horse shook his head and snorted with annoyance, and I was heartily glad when a turn in the road took us out of their line of flight, and we found ourselves in a valley, with a very tolerable road before us.

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We were so tired of the slow pace at which we had been travelling all day that Henry and I determined to take advantage of the comparative smoothness of the roads, and set off at a fast trot which soon left our lazy baggage mules and guides behind us. The two latter were the most disagreeable specimens of the race that we had yet encountered, and it was quite a blessing to lose sight of their sulky faces ; but before long we would gladly have seen them again.

It was just sunset when we arrived at two or three wayside cottages, where we asked the people how far it yet was to San Miguel, and they told us it was only two leagues, “more or less,” a very favourite term of theirs, but generally meaning *more*, and not *less* ; also, that it was a good road, so off we started again, thinking that we could easily arrive at our journey’s end before nightfall ; but we did not know that there was a deep river to ford, and plenty of mud holes on the road we had been told was so good.

We were riding gaily along, finding the mud every minute getting deeper, when Henry thought we should fare better by striking into a by-path which, like most short cuts, proved a long one in the end, for we had not ridden far when we lost all trace of the high road, and at last came to the disagreeable conclusion that we had lost our way.

We at length found ourselves in a wild cattle track, with grass growing as high as our horses' heads, and the darkness so intense that we could not see each other a few yards off. Black heavy clouds obscured the sky, and there was that ominous stillness in the air which is always the precursor of a tropical thunder-storm. I had such a horror of our losing ourselves in the wilderness, that I proposed remaining where we were until daylight, but Henry hit upon a better plan, and that was to turn our horses' heads, and trust to their sagacity for retracing their steps to the main road. To our great relief we

soon found ourselves in the road we had left, but still our position was far from a pleasant one, for the rain came down in torrents, and the thunder and lightning were terrific.

My horse was at last so dreadfully alarmed by one awful flash and the deafening peal that succeeded it, that he absolutely refused to go on, whirling round and round in a perfect river of water. I called aloud to my husband, who was leading the way, to stop; but the rushing rain and the wind completely drowned my voice. Fortunately for me the next brilliant flash, lighting up the road, he missed me, and immediately returned to my rescue; but my horse obstinately refused to proceed, and neither spurring nor coaxing having the slightest effect upon him, Henry dismounted, and led both animals by the bridle through a road that was one mass of mud and deep water. I cannot describe my joy when Henry exclaimed, "Ah! there is a light; we are coming to the houses that we passed at sunset."

For some time, however, the people refused us admittance, imagining, I suppose, that only suspicious characters could be about on such a night, but at last our bad Spanish convinced them we were strangers, and they cautiously unfastened the door.

It was a wretched little hovel; but a bright wood fire burning in one corner looked delightfully cheerful after what we had gone through. The people informed us, however, that our mules and men had passed a short time before the rain commenced, and were safely housed in a cottage, about half a mile off, so we determined to proceed there at once, and one of the men acting as our guide, I re-mounted my dripping horse, Henry still leading him by the rein, and in a short time we arrived at the cottage, where we found our amiable guides comfortably seated before a roaring wood fire, as perfectly indifferent to our fate as could be. I must say I felt indignant; and Henry abused them in English most

heartily, with now and then a Spanish objurgation to give force to his words; but they smiled languidly, looking with a sort of sleepy amusement at Henry's boots as he drew them off; and they were indeed a sight, each being full of water up to the brim.

The poor people of the cottage were exceedingly kind, the old woman giving up her bed to me—a clean and comfortable one—though I had nothing softer to lie upon than the strips of hide covered with an Indian mat, the universal substitute for mattresses, an unknown luxury amongst the peasant class.

As soon as our clothes were dry next morning we started once more, and soon found ourselves on the banks of the river, which we had to cross to get to San Miguel, our next resting-place. We attempted first to go over on horseback, but we found the river so deep that we turned back and crossed by the less romantic, but more comfortable means of a ferry boat.

The neighbourhood of San Miguel was the most uninteresting country we had yet seen, the volcano towering above the town being the only picturesque object. We arrived at the city at twelve o'clock, just as the sun was beginning to scorch us in a very unpleasant manner, and we were glad to find ourselves at the comfortable house of Señor Sonsa, a Spanish merchant, to whom we had a letter of introduction.

Señor Sonsa and his family were absent at their country house, but we were welcomed most kindly by his partner, an old Genoese, who placed the whole house at our "dispocision," or service, a courtly phrase universal among the higher orders of Central Americans, and indeed of all Spaniards.

San Miguel is a pretty, clean little town, the Liverpool of San Salvador, more commerce being carried on here than in any other town of the State. It holds three or four fairs in the course of the year. The principal one, which takes

place in November, is attended by crowds from all the Central American States, the chief dealings being in indigo and cochineal. It is considered the most unhealthy town in Salvador, and many yearly fall victims to their love of gain, or the necessities of business, for the fever generally attacks strangers.

After our adventures by flood and field, it was really pleasant to rest for two days in such comfortable quarters. The *plaza* is very cheerful, from the immense number of market women who sit before their stalls from sunrise till eight o'clock at night, talking and laughing incessantly. In these States every article of food excepting groceries, is bought in the market, there being neither butchers' nor greengrocers' shops to be seen.

Piles of tempting fruits and vegetables are brought in by the country people, at the first dawn of day, and from seven till twelve the market is a gay scene, crowded by servants with their many coloured *rebosas*, or scarfs,

fluttering about from stall to stall, making their purchases. From twelve to four the market is almost deserted by buyers, but at that hour more fish is fried, and more tortillas made ready for supper. The tortilla is the Indian corncake, the substitute for bread universally used throughout Central America. It is very palatable when quite hot and soaked in butter, but a cold tortilla is one of the heaviest and nastiest things that can be imagined, becoming as tough as leather an hour after it is made.

The market place looks exceedingly pretty after sunset, when every woman lights her candle at the stall over which she presides, thus forming a perfect illumination.

The *rebosa* also adds greatly to the beauty of the scene. It is a long scarf, woven by the people of the country, and is made of either cotton or silk in every colour, rich purple and scarlet being the favourites. It is ornamented with a deep fringe at each end, and is most becoming and graceful, either worn over the head

or shoulders. When a number of women are collected together they look like a bed of tulips waving in the breeze, their slow, swimming walk as they pass along being the very perfection of grace.

We witnessed a very impressive sight one day when the procession of the Host passed through the market into the church. It was accompanied by about fifty women, their heads covered by their *rebosas*, in respect for the holy symbol they were following. As the Host was carried past every woman in the crowded market place knelt down, and many of the men, and I could not help being touched by the spirit of veneration expressed in every upturned face.

On the third morning of our stay, I felt sufficiently recruited to proceed, so fresh horses were procured, and we bade adieu to our kind entertainer. Our road lay through the most beautiful country we had yet seen, and as we started fresh we could fully appreciate its beauties.

A succession of splendid mountains and shaded

valleys, and rushing torrents of purest water, made our journey so enchanting that I felt in a dream of delight, and rode on with a heart too full for words, awed by the majesty of the "ever-lasting hills," with their wooded heights and blue volcanic peaks.

We arrived at the pretty little village of Umanos at about four o'clock, and found the posada a wretched place, but we had a room to ourselves and our moço (boy) was a paragon, taking all trouble off our hands, and observant of every wish.

We started next morning at dawn, but this day's journey was not quite so pleasant as that of the day before, the heat being intense, and the roads excessively muddy, after a night of pouring rain. We reached a wayside farm at mid-day, and there rested for two hours; a lounge in the cool grass hammock and a cup of excellent coffee being very grateful after our hot ride.

At two o'clock we were again obliged to start

in order to reach the little village of Lempa before nightfall.

The country became more level every step of the way, and at last on emerging from a melancholy-looking forest, we arrived at sunset at the river Lempa—a rather broad stream, but very turbid and muddy. In the rainy season it is the largest river in the State, and the only one, I believe, navigable for vessels, most of the rivers being nothing more than mountain torrents a few yards in width, shallow and rapid, but so exquisitely clear, that every pebble and rock can be seen at the bottom. Henry said they resembled exactly the mountain streams in Scotland, often reminding him of his beloved Spey.

We crossed the river in a large ferry boat, and soon arrived at the village of Lempa, which was composed of a few scattered huts on the steep bank ; the *posada* was such a dirty place, so full of pigs, dogs, cocks, and hens, and ill-kept children, that we turned away in disgust, and

determined to find some other place to sleep in ; so after wandering about some time, we found a cane shed, occupied by an old woman, whose whole worldly goods seemed to consist of one old bedstead, and we quickly bargained with her for the possession of her property for the night, grateful to find some place where we could at least be quiet. Henry was so hot and exhausted that he went to bathe in the river, but was somewhat disturbed in his enjoyment by seeing an immense alligator within a few yards of him. These animals are fortunately very cowardly, seldom attacking first, though accidents while bathing do occasionally occur. The inhabitants of this village were very dirty and disagreeable, and I was heartily glad after a sleepless night to mount my horse once more and bid adieu to Lempa with its swarms of dogs, pigs, and mosquitoes.

We again entered upon a most enchanting

country, the road continually on the ascent; but so precipitous in some places, that it seemed impossible that any animal but a goat could scale them. The horses, however, of San Salvador are wonderfully sure-footed, and in the most difficult parts I always let my horse pick his own way. The great beauty of this country consists in its verdure, combined with grandeur, lovely brilliant flowers springing out of the bare rocks, and when you reach the summit of a mountain several thousand feet high you find the land as rich and wooded as the smiling valley at its foot.

After resting for an hour at a pretty wayside posada, surrounded by splendid trees, we again started for San Vicente, which town we reached at sunset. It is very beautifully situated at the base of a volcano, which frowns majestically over it. We were most kindly received by the wife of the gentleman to whom we had brought a

letter, and though he was absent, she welcomed us with true Spanish cordiality—hospitality to strangers being one of the Central American virtues, and as much considered a duty in the far west as it is in the east, so that the best of everything is given to the stranger with a warmth and kindness seldom to be met with in more civilized countries.

After a good night's rest in a clean comfortable room, and an excellent breakfast, we started for Cojutepeque, only six leagues off. This little town boasts of one of the best climates in the State, and certainly it is impossible to imagine anything more pure and exhilarating than was the air of the mountains as we approached. We stopped to breakfast a second time at a little village, whose beauty made me almost envious of the poor people whose lot had thrown them into such a paradise. The town of Cojutepeque was distinctly visible on the side of a neighbouring

mountain, gleaming white in the brilliant sunshine, while as far as the eye could reach, mountains and valleys succeeded one another in endless variety, and fields of the feathery rice and golden Indian corn, with groups of houses and cocoa-nut trees, gave animation to the scene, the blue mountains stretching far away in the distance, and formed an appropriate back ground.

After climbing a tremendous hill with natural fountains of the purest water gushing from the rocks, we reached Cojutepeque, having had a very agreeable ride. We were kindly received at the house of the gentleman to whom we had an introduction, and our windows looking out on the *Plaza*, we amused ourselves by watching the motley crowd who thronged it from morning till night. We spent a very pleasant day at the coffee plantation of an English gentleman, situated close to the town, and for the first

time I saw that lovely plant in full bloom with its snow white blossoms and glossy green leaf.

After a stay of two days, we started for San Salvador, the capital of the State, and reached it at three o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAPTER IV.

How strange were my sensations as we entered San Salvador and thought of the long way we had come without danger or difficulty. I could scarcely believe that our delightful journey was really over, and felt a pang of regret as I dismounted from my horse at the house of the gentleman to whom we had brought a letter of introduction.

The environs of the city are very beautiful, being one mass of luxuriant orange and mango trees, bending beneath their load of fruit, and

the cottages of the poor people are remarkably neat and clean, each surrounded by its own beautiful shrubbery of fruit trees. It is strange that the higher classes should prefer living in the city, the consequence of which is there is scarcely one gentleman's house to be seen in this garden of beauty. When we tried to procure a residence in the suburbs the good people of Salvador opened their eyes in astonishment, and told us that no *gente decente* (people of position), ever lived out of the town, so, determined to do at Rome as the Romans do, we contented ourselves with a town house. By the end of a fortnight we had bought the necessary furniture for our new abode; cool yellow Indian mats covered the floors, and the inevitable grass hammock was slung in my bedroom. Like all Central American houses it had a large open court in the centre, with some fine orange trees to shade it, a wide corridor supported by pillars encircled the court like the cloisters of a convent, and on

this our rooms opened with large folding doors, making them delightfully cool.

We found the climate very pleasant in the dry season, which commences in the month of November, the most charming month of the year in Central America, the rain having only just ceased, and there being no dust, while the foliage is of the most brilliant green, and all the wild flowers are in full bloom, making the country lovely with their gorgeous colors. There is one flower particularly beautiful, of the convolvulus tribe, but of an immense size and of every color, also a small crimson creeper called *Trendas d'amor* (chains of love) which runs along the ground, and was a special favorite of mine, but these unfortunately have no perfume. There are, however, wild flowers as sweet smelling as any of Europe, it being a great mistake to imagine that all tropical wild flowers are scentless. The country about San Salvador is very beautiful, but the roads are bad, which draw-

back to enjoyment is the less thought of as nearly every one keeps a horse for riding.

We had not been long settled in our new home before we were invited by a Spanish gentleman to pay a visit to his country estate, about six leagues from the city. We gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity of seeing what country life was like in Salvador, so at four o'clock in the morning we started, two good horses being placed at our disposal by our host. We had a charming ride through some lovely scenery, and in a few hours found ourselves at the Cattle Estate.

A green prairie as smooth as a lake lay stretched before us, encircled by wooded hills. Great taste had been displayed in the selection of a spot whereon to build the house, a long low structure with a broad covered corridor in front, and seated between the pillars there, one might lounge away a lifetime looking at the lovely view. Everything about the house was

exquisitely clean and neat, a great contrast to most Central American country houses, which are generally mere barns, as the owners and their families seldom live in them, leaving a bailiff to attend to their estates, but here, European refinement was everywhere visible.

As I was too fatigued to explore much that day, our host arranged a pretty sight for me in the evening. He sent the *vaqueras* (horsemen who have the care of the cattle) to summon the animals from every part of the immense estate. About a dozen started in as many different directions, each blowing on his horn the long peculiar note understood by the cattle. This summons had not been sounded more than half an hour, when we saw them slowly wending their way down the hills, beautiful glossy cows with the calves frisking behind, and huge stately bulls who every now and then gave a deep impatient bellow for the salt that they knew awaited them in the enclosure. They are accustomed to have

this treat about once a week, and are so passionately fond of it that they will come any distance to obtain it, and the fiercest bulls are tamed in this way. It was a curious sight to see them all assembled, an eager crowd of many hundreds, but one bull had such a particularly awful voice that I was glad to be out of his reach.

At dawn of day I was awakened by the lowing multitude who were again wending their way to their mountain pastures.

Our host showed us with pride his infant coffee plantation, which looked very flourishing, but it is a plant which requires great care for the first four years, when, if all goes well, it bears its first crop. The coffee of San Salvador is nearly equal to that of Costa Rica, but only enough is cultivated for home consumption, most landed proprietors preferring to employ their capital in sugar, rice, or tobacco, which yield a crop every year. Cotton blooms all the year round, and no doubt might be greatly improved

in quality, were proper care bestowed upon it, but for want of machinery for the cleaning process, only a small quantity is planted, and that generally by the poor Indians.

After spending three most pleasant days at this *Hacienda*, we returned to San Salvador, where we found that life in Central America was not without its enjoyments, though we had neither operas, nor concerts, nor balls, as in more civilized lands ; but the early morning gallop through a lovely country, and the moonlit lounge in the Plaza, where a really good band played every evening, were pleasures that can be enjoyed daily without palling.

One custom struck us as very peculiar in this state. Everyone, from the President downwards keeps a shop, and no one objects to appear behind his counter and sell you a reel of cotton, the wives and daughters often officiating in the same capacity, and gossiping with friends, with the counter between them, as if they were in

their drawing rooms; yet one of these ladies showed me her wardrobe one day, containing no less than twelve splendid velvet dresses, and silks innumerable.

There are only four classes besides soldiers in Salvador—great shopkeepers, little shopkeepers, servants, and agriculturists ; the latter class are the pure Indians, and generally have their own little piece of land and house on it. The soldiers are all taken from this class, as they are a far braver and finer race of men than the *Ladinos*, the mixed Indian and Spanish race, and when efficiently commanded they have been known to fight well. The *Ladinos* are often very handsome, especially the women, who generally retain the beautiful Spanish figure and graceful walk of their fairer sisters, the features also partaking more of the Spanish than Indian type, but the coarse lank hair, and tawny skin betray their origin.

Servants, male and female, or very small

shopkeepers compose this class entirely. There are a few families who boast of a pure Spanish descent, and they are not a little proud of their *sangue azul*, but these are so few they can easily be counted.

The ladies are much given to gossip and dress, but are kind-hearted and hospitable, and generally good wives and mothers. Their education is very limited indeed, and their only reading consists in translations from French novels; but they have a great taste for music, and most of them play either the piano or guitar better than is commonly heard in England. They are also capital women of business, and in the absence of their male relations transact all commercial affairs in a way that is astonishing to an English lady. On this account, I suppose, there are far fewer cases of dreadful poverty amongst women than in other countries. The poorest widow will sell her last gown to convert it into goods, with which she opens a tiny shop,

and richer brethren giving a helping hand, you will find her perhaps in six months moved into a larger shop, her shelves well filled with every variety of article.

There are very few foreigners settled in the state ; Spaniards naturally predominate, and, next them, Germans, those universal emigrants, then a few French, and still fewer English. In the town of San Salvador, we had not a single countryman, nor was there a single English book to be seen anywhere. In sheer despair I took to reading Spanish, and soon found that it was the very best method of learning the language rapidly.

The President is elected every three years, and great is the commotion throughout the state for three months before this event. When we were in Salvador, the office was held by a man who had been a priest, but who had abandoned his clerical duties for some years before he was elected president.

He was an agreeable man in society, with rather too oily a manner for my taste, but was generally popular in the country, I believe, having been twice called to the head of the state.

I have been told that if the Republic were governed in accordance with the laws, there would not be a happier, a freer, or a more prosperous place in the world; but, unfortunately, patriotism is a rare virtue, and justice can be sold there to the highest bidder. The consequence of this is endless anarchy and civil war, if so dignified a title can be given to the *pronunciamientos*, as the constant revolutions are called. But the evil they do to the country is dreadful, each rival faction drawing the poor Indians from their agricultural pursuits, when their labour is most required, to fight for a cause of which they know nothing, and for which they care less. After a few marches and counter-marches, a few bloodless fights, and a great deal

of ruin to commerce and crops, the affair is over for the time, and one or other of the rival Presidents gains the day, with an immense amount of *palaver*. After residing three months in Salvador, my husband had occasion to visit the town of Sonsonate, a flourishing little town situated in a lovely valley, six leagues from the sea-port of Acajutla. I accompanied him, and we were so much pleased with the place that we prolonged our visit, and most fortunate was it for us that we did so, for we had not been absent from our home more than a month when the news reached us of the total destruction of San Salvador by a fearful earthquake.

On the morning of the 16th April the inhabitants were alarmed by a severe shock which fortunately came as a warning to many who left their rooms for the open courts and squares, and at half past ten a far severer shock followed, only lasting ten seconds, but so tremendous was the convulsion that scarcely a building was left

standing. The houses being all built of *adobes* (baked earth), the whole air was impregnated with a suffocating dust, and to add to the horrors of the scene many young children were killed by this alone. The fine cathedral whose massive walls, three feet thick, had stood so many earthquakes, was now a ruin, and most of the churches and the handsome new college met with a similar fate.

Were I to relate all the tales of horror and misery which I heard, I should fill pages. Husbands seeking their wives, mothers their children, many rushing about the streets confessing their sins aloud, whilst priests raised the cross on high saying the day of judgment was come, and several people died in the streets who had been sick or dying when the earthquake took place. When day dawned on this scene of ruin and desolation no means were left untried to save the figure of the Patron Saint of San Salvador, which was unfortunately buried beneath the ruins of the

cathedral. In these efforts the Bishop joined and they had the satisfaction of digging out the figure at last, almost uninjured, and it was immediately carried off to Cojutepeque attended by the Bishop and a long procession of priests.

The loss of property was immense, many being rendered penniless who were rich the day before. Every one fled, except robbers and those who valued their property more than their lives, and hoped to save the wreck of their fortunes by digging beneath the ruins; but even these few were soon obliged to leave the scene of desolation, as a pestilence broke out caused by the number of dead bodies left unburied. The shocks of earthquake continued without intermission for many days, but gradually subsided, when the frightened natives returned to rebuild their city, for so great is the infatuation of the people of San Salvador, that all attempts to induce them to

move the capital to some more favoured spot are vain. Their argument on this occasion was that as San Salvador had been so utterly destroyed, it was not probable such another earthquake would occur for a century, that being about the time that had elapsed since the last destruction of it.

This was a melancholy year for Central America, for after the earthquake came a famine, the corn crops being destroyed by locusts that came in millions, devouring every green leaf, every blade of corn, causing a fearful amount of misery to the poor people. In the neighbourhood of San Salvador a revolution was nearly breaking out because the inhabitants of Cojute-peque refused to deliver up the figure of the Patron Saint which had been placed there for safety in the hour of adversity. The images that these poor Indians love so devoutly, are the most hideous cadaverous looking figures imaginable, and when, on the festival of Corpus

Christi, they are carried in procession through the streets, the effect produced on the mind is almost painful.

The kitchens in Central America are very primitive, being nothing more than a portion of the corridor, a low brick wall about a yard wide, running the whole length of it, and forming the kitchen range: circles of round rough stones are placed at intervals along this wall, and within these circles the wood fires are kindled, from which proceed such excellent dinners of fish, flesh, and fowl, to say nothing of marvellous sweet dishes, in which the native cooks stand unrivalled.

A small hole in the roof lets out the smoke, which is very trifling, from a wood fire, and the kitchen being unenclosed all round, there is little need even for that.

The tortillas and chocolate for family consumption are generally made at home, though they can be procured in the market, if preferred. A servant, called a *moliendera*, is the one upon

whom these duties devolve. She is also the water carrier, and is generally an Indian by birth, retaining her native costume, the dark blue cotton shirt of scanty dimensions, and white linen *rebosa*, or scarf.

The upper servants are invariably taken from the *ladino* class, and are on the whole, honest, kind-hearted, and capable of strong attachment to their masters. The women are excellent cooks and nurses, and the men good grooms, thoroughly understanding the management of horses, and their treatment when sick.

They will not, however, do one half the work that an European will—a family of two persons requiring at least four servants to ensure anything like comfort.

The women servants always dress in the tasteful *nagua* costume—a loose white chemisette, cut low in the neck and sleeves, with the full furbelowed skirt of coloured cotton or muslin. Spangles do not seem to be worn in Salvador,

though so frequently seen in the state of Nicaragua.

They wear no shoes, but their small brown feet are so pretty that the eye soon gets accustomed to the omission. If, by any chance, a servant is seen in shoes, she is sure to be utterly idle and worthless. She gives herself fine-lady airs, and thinks that a person wearing shoes has no necessity to work.

When I was told this I laughed and did not believe it, but I found afterwards from experience that it was nothing but the simple truth.

It is impossible for any description to do justice to the size and beauty of the trees throughout the state of Salvador. The tree cotton is one of the most beautiful, growing to an enormous size, and its feathery yellow blossom is very graceful.

The soft, downy fibre of this pod is often used for mattresses, and it makes as soft a bed as feathers.

The flowering trees are also wonderfully beautiful, particularly one, which I used to call the golden tree, never being able to remember its real name. It grows to the size of the oak, and its branches become loaded with the brightest yellow, bell-shaped blossoms, before a single green leaf appears.

When these fade, the foliage bursts out, and lasts until the following spring, when it again gives place to the glowing flowers.

This tree can be seen an immense distance off, and forms a striking and beautiful object amongst the dark green foliage of the orange and mango trees. The tree of the *flor de pascua* is almost equally lovely; it blooms at Christmas and Easter, hence its name.

The flowers are of two sorts, deep crimson and white, streaked here and there with pink. They are also very fragrant, which adds another charm to their beauty; they are much used for the religious *fiestas*.

The forests are full of magnificent cedar and balsam trees, and the lovely creeper, vanilla, grows in wild profusion everywhere. The former wood is so plentiful that all the commonest furniture is made of it, being far cheaper than plain deal in England.

The balsam trade is entirely in the hands of the Indians, and they are exceedingly jealous of any interlopers, and will only deal with a few favoured merchants.

Deep incisions are made in the trunk of the tree, and yards of cotton cloth wound round it, while the tree is "sweating," as the expression is. The balsam is then extracted from the cloths, when the latter are thoroughly saturated, bottled in stone jars, and brought into the towns for sale. I believe it is a very costly article.

There is also a gum tree, which undergoes the same process, that is, incisions are made in the bark, from which exudes a medical gum, resembling gum Arabic in appearance, but with

rather a disagreeable taste. It is considered very beneficial for coughs.

The country abounds with medicinal plants, almost growing wild—castor oil, senna, rhubarb, Peruvian bark, and many others. There is one kind of creeper famous for the cure of snake bites. The bark of it is soaked in any kind of spirit, and a small quantity of that is said to be an infallible cure, if taken immediately after the wound is inflicted. Fidgetty people, just arriving in this country, generally keep a bottle of it in readiness, but if the country is infested with snakes, as some people try to make out, they keep wonderfully out of sight. I never came across one the whole time I was in Salvador, and never heard of anyone dying from the bite of one.

Insects are numerous, and some very venomous; but I found a good use of the broom could always keep them under. Beds should always, in the tropics, stand in the middle of the room,

and boxes be moved from their position every day.

When we first moved into our house in Sonsonate, another town of Salvador, we found it much infested with centipedes, scorpions, and venomous spiders, but attributed it solely to want of care in our predecessors, and before a month was passed were quite free of the nuisance, but not before I had received a bite in one of my fingers from some unknown enemy, who had attacked me when I was asleep.

I suffered dreadfully with it, my whole hand being swollen, and the pain extending up to the shoulder, accompanied by a great deal of fever; yet the bite was not bigger than a pin's point.

I attributed it to a very beautiful little crimson spider, called *mate frayle*, known to be one of the most venomous species, there being a perfect colony of them in the outside corridor.

They derive their name from a legend told of one of their ancestors, who wove his bed in a

monastery, and killed, by his bite, one of the holiest of the friars. They are held, in consequence, in especial fear, and hated by the natives.

I was also roused from my sleep one night by a rustling in the room, and saw, to my horror, a huge spider emerging from beneath my wardrobe, his clawed feet making as much noise on the matted floor as a crab's; but fortunately these tarantulas are rarely seen in town houses, and a strict regard to cleanliness invariably routs every species of insect.

CHAPTER V.

THE country between San Salvador and Sonsonate is very beautiful; a wild deep gully, called the Guarramal, is particularly striking, its steep sides being fringed with the tree fern, a most rare and lovely tree. The road down to this gully is even awfully grand—a fearful precipice of nearly a thousand feet being on one side of the narrow pathway, while a perpendicular wall rises on the other. It seems as if some terrific earthquake had rent asunder the mountain, for piles of huge stones form the bottom of the gully,

amongst which a stream forces its noisy way, in some parts quite deep, in others barely wetting the horses' feet. On this mountain stands a tree of the most extraordinary size and beauty. I believe it is called a *cedro*, and is indigenous to the country. It *seemed* to me that I was several minutes walking round the mighty trunk; but as I unfortunately cannot give its dimensions I will only speak of the impression left on my mind being that I occupied that time. Human beings walking or sitting in the cool green shade of its widely-extended branches, look like ants, and the senses become oppressed with the grandeur of this giant tree, which must be seen to be believed in. Never can I forget the impression the first sight of it made on my mind. I felt breathless with surprise and awe.

Sonsonate, meaning in the Indian language "the city of a thousand streams," is a prettily-situated town, but excessively hot, from being completely walled in by high mountains on every

side, except that towards the sea. There is a good carriage road, of six leagues, down to Acajutla, which, in commercial importance, ranks next to La Union. The valley is most fertile, being a mass of orange, mango, and cocoa-nut trees, the latter exceedingly beautiful, towering above the others with their fan-like tops.

The society is the pleasantest in all the state, from the number of foreigners settled there, and its vicinity to the seaport gives a life and animation to the place, which is not to be met with in more inland towns. The port road is the fashionable promenade of an evening, and on moonlight nights especially, it is crowded with señoritas taking their stately lounge, and gentlemen showing off their excellent horsemanship before them.

The Central Americans, generally, are splendid riders, seeming literally part of the animal on which they are mounted. The races are held on

St. John's day, the 24th of June, and also on St. Peter's, on the port road, and the intense passion for horsemanship which reigns in every heart is then apparent. As nearly every man, be he rich or poor, possesses a horse, the crowd of equestrians is something wonderful, and it is dangerous on certain occasions for any woman to walk in the narrow streets, owing to the troops of horsemen riding, where the width will admit of it, twelve abreast, and dashing round the corners at a mad rate, utterly regardless of whom they may knock down.

A favourite amusement is riding abreast, arm-in-arm, at the most furious speed, then suddenly halting their horses. The favourite feat of all, however, is that of carrying off the head of a live duck slung upon a pole. The poor creature's neck is well greased, and each horseman in turn tries to wrench off its head, as he passes at full gallop. Another exploit, requiring really good horsemanship, is the picking up from the ground

some small article, while the horse is put to his utmost speed.

I have often stood for hours at a window watching all this fearless horsemanship with delight, and wondering how men who can ride so well can fight so badly. The races and the religious festivals are about the only amusements the lower classes have. The latter are kept up with great solemnity, particularly in Passion-week, when there are processions nearly every day; but that on Good Friday is really worth seeing, if only for the adornment of the streets. Every person is expected to "make a carpet," as it is called, in front of his house, wherever the procession passes. Brilliant flowers, laid out in squares and patterns, are much used; but coloured shavings, rice, and even coffee-grounds are brought into request. The effect of a long street, all laid over with these gay "carpets," is exceedingly pretty and curious. Crosses formed of the white datura are also frequent, filling the

air with their exquisite perfume. The most impressive sight, however, is the midnight procession, when hundreds of men and women, each with a lighted wax candle, proceed in two lines down all the principal streets. Not a word is uttered, and the solemn procession winds along, like a huge fiery snake, till lost in the distance. The ladies have one procession all to themselves, no man being allowed to join them. The consumption of wax must be something enormous during this time, for the poorest save a trifle to buy their tapers. The depth of religious feeling amongst the poorer orders seems very great, if the outward seriousness of their devotion be any criterion. The whole of Passion-week the streets are crowded with processions of men and women, praying aloud, and openly bewailing their sins, one old woman, with a particularly high, cracked voice, generally commencing the recitative, while the others follow her lead; but I must say amongst these devotees the women predominate.

When the cholera broke out in 1857, the same marks of devotion were shown, men and women, and even little children, carrying huge wooden crosses through the streets, and praying aloud.

The power the priests possess over the minds of the Indians is wonderful. In the most remote districts their word is law, and a pass from a priest ensures a stranger a welcome wherever he may go. There can be no doubt that the Roman Catholic missionaries have had far greater success in Christianizing the Indians in Central and South America, than our Protestant missionaries have had in most parts of the world. Perhaps more care was taken originally in sending out really clever and eloquent men, perhaps the ceremonies and practices of the Roman Catholic Church are more suited to the savage than those of our more simple worship.

In the large Indian population of central America there are few tribes that are not apparently sincere and devout Roman Catholics.

The inhabitants of Salvador are a far superior race to their neighbours in Mexico, travellers being able to traverse the whole of the state with little fear of robbery or violence of any kind. The Indians of the *pura raza* are exceedingly honest, and have a great respect, and even liking for any foreigners, except a Spaniard,—there the old animosity still prevails. The Indians were the only class really benefited by the Declaration of Independence of Spain, their condition before that event being then but little better than that of slaves; in fact, the principal landowners amongst the Spaniards did possess many slaves, but now any Indian may buy his patch of ground sufficient to raise his Indian corn and plantains, with which he is content. Many of the most fertile lands in the country belong to the Indian communities, not a foot of which can be sold without the consent of their head man.

Two leagues from Sonsonate, is the large

Indian town of Isalco, said to contain a population of sixty thousand. It is charmingly situated on the brow of a hill, and is considered exceedingly healthy and much cooler than Sonsonate. We resided there for three months for the recovery of my health, during which time I had an opportunity of seeing much of the Indian character, which raised it infinitely higher in my estimation than that of the Ladinos, for with all their ignorance and superstition, they are moral, honest, and industrious, which cannot be said of the mixed race.

Our house was situated in a green *plaza*, shaded by two magnificent trees, while the smoking volcano of Isalco, seemed nearly to overshadow the town, being within six miles of it. The *plaza* contained the ruins of the first church that the Spaniards built in the State of Salvador, and the bells are very beautiful, being a royal gift from King Philip himself. This fact is engraved on the largest of the bells,

which are hung in a small belfry of modern construction apart from the church. The latter was ruined a great many years ago by one of the numerous earthquakes, and nothing but the bare brick walls remain, with here and there a window filled with tangled creepers and ferns.

The great Fair of Isalco occurred during our stay there. It is held in the *plaza*, and crowds come from every part of the State to buy and sell, and amuse themselves, but it is principally an Indian *fiesta*, the whites being but a sprinkling amongst the many thousands assembled. The great event of the day is a kind of descriptive or dramatic dance, which is curious on account of its having been annually performed by the Indians ever since the Spanish conquest. On the occasion on which I saw it the dancers or actors consisted of a party of twelve Indians, six of whom, intended to represent the Spanish Conquerors, were dressed in long blue tail coats, with red collars and cuffs, and enormous cocked

hats, and as their feet were shoeless and stockingless, the effect was droll enough.

The other six were dressed in fanciful costumes, with gaudy feathers in their heads and in their hands, the latter being the only weapons with which they were provided to resist the formidable swords carried by their opponents. They commenced a slow, measured dance, after which the leader of the Spanish host stepped forward and informed the Indians that he intended to take possession of their country in the name of Charles V. Then the Indian king replied, or ought to have done so, but, being on that occasion intoxicated, his Majesty's answer was perfectly unintelligible. He was a gigantic man, and the painful efforts he made to keep himself from falling in the war dance did not add to the dignity of his appearance.

The manner in which the Indians recite this play is irresistibly ludicrous, being a species of sing-song intoning, delivered with a solemnity of

face which makes their ridiculous costumes still more absurd.

The Indians, at last, after much palaver, acknowledged themselves conquered, and the affair ended in an amicable dance, in which the poor king, after losing his crown, nearly lost his balance.

Our life in Sonsonate was varied by an occasional trip to Acajutta, but as all seaside places are unhealthy in the tropics, our stay was never prolonged beyond two or three days. It is a poor little place, of a few scattered houses, but the sea is magnificent, being an open roadstead. A foreigner at Sonsonate has erected a good mole, a great boon to all engaged in commerce, as before that their goods were frequently damaged coming ashore in the surf boats. A steamer belonging to the Panama Railway Company calls once a month at all the principal ports of Guatemala, Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua, and the commerce of Central America has increased

wonderfully since she commenced her trips. It is also a great convenience to passengers for Europe, as a week's voyage in a most comfortable steamer takes them to Panama, instead of their having to undergo the fatigue of a long land journey to Belize over the most fearful roads. Acajutta is famous for its beautiful shells, out of which the most lovely flowers are made. There is one part of the coast called the "beach of flowers," and literally the ground seems strewn with the petals of roses; they are, however, of all colours, and so exquisitely fine and transparently thin that it is wonderful how any escape the violence of the waves. The making of shell flowers is one of the accomplishments of the ladies of Sonsonate, and great taste is displayed in the arrangement of the bouquets. The roses are especially natural, the tints of red and yellow being precisely those of the real flower.

An occasional man-of-war, either French or English (generally the former), sometimes finds

her way as far as Acajutta, when great is the excitement and pleasure amongst the señoritas, as their arrival is generally followed by a little gaiety. These visits are, however, few and far between, Captains seldom caring to leave the delights of Valparaiso for the uncivilized parts of Central America.

We once spent a delightful ten days in the country house of a lady of our acquaintance, and as it was rather different from country life in England, I will describe it. In the first place the house was not quite finished, being without a roof, but as it was the dry season this was considered of little consequence, though the effect was certainly peculiar—looking up into the star-lit sky—to one not accustomed to sleep in the open air. The ladies of the party all slept in one large room, while the gentlemen slung their hammocks in the outer corridors. At dawn of day we were all awake, and sallied forth to the beautiful rapid river which runs through the estate,

and there enjoyed the luxury of a bath, and what a luxury it is in that burning climate! One feels as if one could live for ever in the clear, cold water, though hunger at last drives one home to breakfast—if such a term can be applied to the luxurious *déjeuner à la fourchette* which was always awaiting us.

After resting an hour or two in the heat of the day, the gentlemen generally took their guns and dived into the neighbourhood in search of game, whilst the ladies lounged, eat fruit, and chatted until it was time for bath the second, after which we returned home to meet the gentlemen whose vehement popping off of guns heralded their approach, and who generally had that crest-fallen appearance which belongs to unsuccessful sportsmen, for though the pheasants are so near that their cry is distinctly heard, it is almost impossible to get at them from the great growth of underwood. After dinner,

games, singing, and delightful rambles in the moonlight ended the pleasant day.

There is an ease, gaiety, and simplicity about these country visits in Central America peculiarly refreshing; there is no fine dressing amongst the ladies, nor formality of any kind; for a time all seem to become as gay and light-hearted as children in the full enjoyment of a holiday, and perhaps the genial climate tends much to this happy frame of mind.

This assemblage of friends was in honour of a *rice machine*, which had just arrived from England ; an English mechanic had been employed in making a water-wheel by which it was turned, and the neatness and expedition with which it was completed surprised the slow native carpenters not a little. Machinery is beginning to be introduced into Salvador, and would be more so if there were more clever mechanics settled in the country ; but people

are afraid of spending much in machines when there is no one capable of repairing them when out of order. I am sure if it were more known many English mechanics would flock to Salvador, where their services are so well paid, and living is so reasonable. The mechanic I have just mentioned, and his brother, had not been settled in Sonsonate many months before their hands were full of work, and broadcloth, gold chains, and prancing steeds soon showed how well they were remunerated. Any clever, hard-working mechanic, may rapidly make money in Salvador, if he only avoids drinking ; but if he indulges in that fatal vice, fever holds him as her prey, and all his earnings go to pay doctor's bills, which, throughout Central America, are exorbitant.

The climate of Salvador is an exceedingly healthy one for the tropics, the fevers even amongst Europeans being seldom fatal, and a man who is temperate in his habits has, perhaps,

as fair a chance of living to a good old age as he has in Europe.

During an eight years' residence, we were only once visited by cholera, and other epidemics are exceedingly rare. There is a great variation of climate in Salvador on account of the height of its mountain ranges, and this conduces greatly to its health—for the fever-stricken invalid may, in half a day's journey, be transported to a climate like the South of France, in fact cooler, as oranges even will not thrive in the open air, and ice is to be seen on the roads in December.

CHAPTER VI.

My health occasionally obliged me to leave Sonsonate, and I once spent a delightful month in a mountain *Hacienda*. It was almost on a level with the neighbouring volcano of Isalco, and the air was the purest and most exhilarating I ever breathed. We were literally in the clouds, or rather above them, though still higher peaks rose on every side of us. This is the region of wheat and other European products, the best vegetables being grown on this mountain summit. Even the Indians here have a rich

colour on their swarthy cheeks, while the few whites look like Europeans, so fresh and blooming in their appearance. Our host and his amiable wife were exceedingly kind, and welcomed us with that ease and courtesy belonging to all of Spanish race ; their best rooms were given up to us, and everything done to make us thoroughly at home.

Part of the large estate lay through a lovely green prairie, dotted here and there with high trees, and a morning gallop across this plain was the most exhilarating thing I ever felt. Horses seem to feel the same pleasure as their riders in these lovely grassy plains, requiring no spur to urge them on, while they snuff up the fresh air and shake their manes with delight. The cows also must lead a happy life in these evergreen pastures, and I have never tasted such milk and butter as they produce ; the impunity with which the lady of the domain went amongst her horned favourites was surprising to me, and one

day we were actually prevented crossing over a stile by a crowd of these creatures hemming us in, some intrusive cows putting their muzzles into her hand in search of the salt with which she often regaled them.

A great eruption of the volcano of Isalco occurred while we were staying at this *Hacienda*, and as we were distinctly on a line with it, we had the full benefit of the ashes.

We were awakened in the night by the strong and suffocating smell of sulphur, and on opening the outer door found a thick shower of ashes falling continuously, and silently. It looked precisely like a snow storm turned black. As day dawned a really awful sight presented itself, the whole country being black with ashes, not a green leaf to be seen, and the sky enveloped in a dull lurid fog, through which the sun in vain tried to pierce. Our throats were much affected by the sulphur; and we began seriously to consider whether the country was about to

become a second Pompeii, but fear was almost swallowed up in the interest of the wonderful scene before us.

For three days the eruption lasted, not a drop of rain falling, though it was the rainy season, and large forest trees were broken by the enormous weight of ashes falling on them, their branches strewing the roads for miles. One forest especially looked as if blackened and half consumed by fire, and every blade of grass was withered and scorched up. The flourishing crops were utterly ruined, the cattle all deserted the desolate region that had so lately yielded them such sweet pasturage, and had to traverse eighteen miles before they emerged from the ashes. It was discovered afterwards that an enormous new crater had opened in the side of the volcano. Sonsonate and all the lowlands had escaped the ashes, but the lava flowed within a mile of the town of Isalco to the great trepidation of the inhabitants.

A mountain in front of the volcano unfortunately shut out our view of the eruption, which our friends in Sonsonate told us was the most magnificent that had ever been remembered there.

Central America is indeed a wonderful country for volcanoes. The state of Salvador alone has no less than half a dozen, some active, some apparently extinct, and strange to say the Spaniards have invariably chosen as a site for their towns the immediate vicinity of a volcano, perhaps on account of the great fertility of the adjacent country. Nicaragua and Guatemala are equally intersected with volcanoes, and subject in consequence to fearful earthquakes, so that I do not wonder that some writer has imagined the whole of Central America to be nothing but a thin crust of earth over subterranean fires.

A few leagues from Sonsonate a curious sight

is to be seen; pools of boiling water hissing up from the naked rock, and steam issuing from every crack, the place being aptly called by the natives the *Infernillos*. Large craters mysteriously converted into lakes are another source of interest to the traveller, and always abound with wild fowl, much sought after by sportsmen. These waters are generally tepid, and delicious for bathing purposes, and it is impossible to describe the beauty of these inland lakes, surrounded by the wooded hills crowned with blue volcanic peaks.

It was a subject of endless astonishment to me to find how few travellers cared to bend their steps towards these lovely regions abounding with everything grand and beautiful in nature; but I trust the monthly steamers from Panama now established, may induce many lovers of the glorious works of God to visit the interior of Central America, so little known and so needlessly feared on account of its supposed bad climate.

What most strikes one on arriving from Europe is the absence of all extreme poverty; there are a few beggars certainly who come regularly every Saturday for their weekly dole, but they are as nothing in proportion to the population. There are no almshouses, and very few charitable institutions, yet the eye is not offended, as it is in the south of Europe, by swarms of loathsome objects, afflicted with every disease under the sun, nor do you see the gaunt forms and starving faces that meet you too often in every large town in England. The few beggars seem a happy contented set; gaining sufficient on the Saturday to last them for the week, during which they hide themselves away, who knows where? but at all events there is no such thing as begging in the streets.

The system of charity is very simple; the poorest giving their mite to the Saturday beggars, some giving money, others tortillias, cocoa beans,

handfuls of rice, cigars, and reels of cotton. All sorts of sundries are to be found in the beggar's basket, and these articles they exchange for food or money as they please; the *quartillio* givers of course, have the largest amount of blessings showered upon them. The parish priests are also indefatigable in their visits to the poor and the sick, which is no doubt one of the sources of their great influence throughout the country; whatever faults they may have, want of charity is not one of them; at all hours and in all weathers they are ready to mount their mules and visit and comfort the sick and the afflicted.

In the country districts the parish priest has his table nearly supplied by his grateful parishioners, who bring baskets of eggs, fowls, and other produce of their little farms, quite as a matter of course, and lucky for the priests that it is so, for their pay is often so miserable as to be barely sufficient to keep body and soul

together, yet an amount of work is expected from them that would stagger some of our luxurious clergy in Europe.

Some of the customs of the Indians are very peculiar; the girls are generally affianced when quite children to boys but little older than themselves, when they leave the home of their own parents, and go to live with their future father-in-law, where they are considered and treated as daughters from that time; at the age of fourteen they are regarded as old enough to marry, but still continue to live with their husbands' family, and the husband is seldom more than eighteen when he takes upon himself the care of a family, yet these early marriages are said in most cases to turn out very happily, the Indian wives being noted for their morality and good conduct, a thing which cannot be said of the *Ladinos*.

The Indian bridegroom makes his wife's *trousseau* himself, the women, strange to say, being entirely ignorant of needlework, but cer-

tainly the devoted swain has not much to do for his lady love, the only garment being a long straight piece of cotton cloth without a seam, which is fastened round the waist by a crimson sash, while a snow white *rebosa* of very fine material is folded over the breast. The man's costume is very pretty, consisting generally of a white jacket, most tastefully embroidered down the back in coloured wool or cotton, with very loose white trousers, reaching only to the knee, and a straw hat nearly as wide as an umbrella. Most of them have fine, muscular figures, with honest, good tempered faces of decidedly Eastern type. The women are generally inferior in personal appearance, but have the sweetest voices in the world. The men have a great deal of the imperturbability of the North American Indian, but are a gentler and less warlike race, caring for nothing but the cultivation of their lands and their evening lounge in the hammock. They are a most provoking people if you are in a hurry, as

nothing will induce them to move out of their slow, measured stride, and they look upon any ebullition of impatience on your part with the smiling pity that we give to an angry child.

The first start on a journey is very trying to a new comer; the loading of the mules and of the men's backs takes always treble the time necessary, and it is in vain you point to the rising sun and say you wish to escape his rays; the Indian will quietly adjust and re-adjust his load entirely to his satisfaction before he will move, and many a precious hour of coolness is lost by his dreadful inertness, though once fairly started, he will trudge on for leagues with untiring energy.

The way in which young children travel in this country over the roughest roads is very ingenious. A sheet is knotted round the neck of the horseman, in order to form a hammock, a small pillow is placed inside, and the babe lies as comfortably as if in its own cradle, the jolting

of the horse's movement being nearly unfelt, while the rider's hands are left free for the management of the reins. My little girl of nine months old travelled in this way over some of the worst roads in the country, lulled to sleep by the open air and the gentle swaying to and fro of the extemporised hammock.

Santa Tecla, or New San Salvador, as it is called, is about six leagues from the old capital, which, as I mentioned, was destroyed by earthquake. We heard so much of the salubrity of the climate that we were tempted to live there for a few months. It was a hot day in February when we set off, accompanied by about twenty Indians, carrying all our belongings, for furnished lodgings are an unknown luxury.

We had to sleep one night on the road at a very miserable place called Guarmoco, the most dreary looking town in all Salvador—a collection of mean, dirty houses, and one ugly white-washed church, built upon a dusty plain, unre-

lieved by a single tree or blade of grass. Such is Guarmoco. No wonder that the people and even the animals are sickly in such a depressing place. Men, women, and children are all subject to *goitre*, a common complaint throughout the country, but this is the only place where cows, horses, pigs, and poultry, are equally affected.

This disgusting disease cannot arise from either the water or climate of Salvador, as a clever French physician who had lived in the country thirty years, told me he had never known a single Englishman afflicted with *goitre* during the whole of that time. It does not seem to cause idiotcy as in the Swiss cantons.

We found Santa Tecla quite worthy of its good repute, for the climate was perfectly exquisite. The town is situated on a green plain on the summit of a hill, while lovely wooded mountains rise on nearly every side of it. It is, however, singularly destitute of trees in its immediate

vicinity—a great contrast in this to Sonsonate, which is perfectly embosomed in masses of fruit trees. There is also a great dearth of water, there being no river near the town, and the wells few and far between. In a tropical climate this is a great drawback to the prosperity of any place, and many of the principal families of San Salvador prefer to remain there at the risk of being overwhelmed by another earthquake, to living in a place where they cannot have their daily plunge in the river.

There are many fine houses in Santa Tecla, besides a good college, whose head master is an exceedingly well informed Spanish priest, who is perfectly adored by his boys. The Bishop of Salvador also resided there at the time of our visit, and his Cathedral was in course of building. The architect was a German, who by his hard working industry was rapidly making a fortune, and the cathedral promised to be a fine edifice. Very great is the disgust of the inhabitants of

the old capital to find that their beloved Bishop is fairly a fixture at the hated Santa Tecla, for the animosity between the two towns is quite extraordinary, near relations even quarrelling fiercely on the subject.

A small omnibus—the only one in the State—runs daily between the rival towns, and the Spanish driver we found worth knowing, being quite a character, full of quaint sayings, and remarkably intelligent and amusing in conversation; so the seat on the box beside Pedro was always sought after by the gentlemen. He also a capital whip, and drove tandem, at a spanking speeed over roads that would somewhat horrify an English coachman, though no accident ever occurred.

We made several trips to San Salvador, and I was surprised to find how rapidly the town had risen from its ruins, though at every turning signs met the eye of the terrible convulsion it had suffered. Walls a yard thick rent in two,

columns lying prostrate, roofs fallen in, all strangely mingled with fine new houses freshly painted and splendidly furnished; rich soft carpets, damask curtains and velvet furniture having superseded the Indian mats and cane sofas of former years, though, for my part, I prefer the latter with the thermometer at ninety.

We paid a visit, of course to the President Señor Barino and his charming wife, and were much pleased with both. He was a very fine looking man, in the prime of life, with a clever, keen face, and most agreeable and gentlemanlike manners. His wife went by the name of the “Imperatrice,” on account of the graceful dignity of her demeanour.

I must not pass over in my description of religious festivals, that on Christmas Day.

In most houses one corner of the principal sala is devoted to the erection of a species of altar, where an image of the Child Saviour is to

be seen, generally lying in a cradle, with Mary and Joseph watching over Him. A canopy of either silk or coloured paper, spangled with golden or silver stars and drops, hangs over the group, and around them every imaginable ornament is disposed. The ground is always strewn with petals of flowers, coloured shavings, rice, branches of trees, shells, vases, &c., and in the more elaborate ones a rail is placed round the sacred spot, all intertwined with gorgeous blossoms.

I saw one nacimiento—as these altars are called—which had cost the lady who had erected it a large sum of money. The figures were as large as life, and beautifully executed, and besides the Holy Family and the cradle—which was a perfect work of art—there were the cattle of the manger also life size, and admirably natural. From the other side of the room, they looked as if alive.

Crowds visit these nasceimientos, which at night are illuminated by large wax candles, and it is one of the customs on Christmas Eve to visit as many as possible before the midnight mass. The poorest persons may cross the threshold of any house where one of these altars is erected, and offer up his sincere homage, the door being generally kept open until twelve o'clock.

The great fiesta of the year, however, in Sonsonate, is that of Candelavia in the month of February.

A fair is held in the market-place, and crowds come to buy and sell, from every town in Salvador, and many from the neighbouring states.

After several days devoted to business, the plaza is cleared of its booth, and stands erected for the bull-fights.

These latter are always very harmless affairs, the so-called bull being oftener a poor young heifer, or patient ox.

There are the usual number of picadors, dressed in fantastic costumes, but no matador, as no killing is allowed ; the former try to enrage the good-tempered animal by dancing before him with red flags, darting fiery squibs into him, and resorting to the usual petty tortures, common in all bull-fights. They occasionally succeed in making him butt his head slightly, and pursue his tormentor for a few paces, and this act causes a great excitement amongst the assembled thousands, while the mounted picador flies from the threatened danger as fast as his horse can carry him.

The most amusing thing at these fiestas is to see the antics of the saddled ox.

A very good rider keeps on his back, and makes him career round the plaza to his great disgust.

He kicks, plunges, butts furiously, but all in vain ; he cannot dismount the agile rider, who

sticks on in the most wonderful manner, amid roars of laughter from the crowd.

A small theatre was opened for the first time during this fiesta, and though the actors were all amateurs, some of them were really very good.

The Spanish play of the “Barber of Seville” was acted admirably, and my astonishment was great when I was told that the heroine of the piece was only a market girl, who did not even know how to read, but had been taught her part by word of mouth.

I saw her afterwards in the tragedy of “Marie Stuart,” and she looked every inch a queen, with her beautiful dignified face and graceful walk. She had a singularly white skin for a ladino, and wore her black velvet train, and Marie Stuart cap, as if she had been accustomed to them all her life.

The tragedy, however, was not so well acted

as the comedy had been, there being the usual amount of bathos, and the costumes of the Highlanders were something wonderful.

The audience had also to wait a most unreasonable time between the acts, and as the theatre was not very brilliantly lighted with oil lamps, and the heat excessive, a great inclination to sleep was produced.

A friend who accompanied us, regularly settled herself off into a comfortable doze, directly the curtain descended, conjuring us by no means to wake her until it rose again.

A mischievous young Spaniard, of our acquaintance, knowing this custom of hers, hid himself in the back of one of the boxes, and commenced crowing loudly, being immediately answered from the pit by a friend who enacted the part of hen, upon which she woke with a start, imagining it was morning.

The piece was not over until nearly three o'clock, when we all wended our way homewards

through the moonlit streets, very tired, and voting a theatre in the tropics a mistake.

Wandering troupes of equestrians from Mexico frequently find their way to Salvador, and as the love of horsemanship is inherent in every man, woman, and child, throughout the State, they always find plenty of supporters.

There is not much gaiety amongst the higher orders in Salvador, dinners and balls being very rare; *déjeuners* at eleven o'clock are their favourite entertainments, and these seem to combine breakfast, dinner, and supper, all in one. The table is loaded with luxuries, both native and foreign, and as the guests are generally all intimate one with the other, these reunions are very pleasant things.

After breakfast, ladies and gentlemen resort to the drawing-room, or lounge about the cool corridors, and patio* as they please ; the sweet tones of the guitar are soon heard mingling with

* Court.

the piano, and occasionally if the weather is not too oppressively hot, a dance is got up amongst the younger portion of the assembly.

The day is concluded by the whole party proceeding at sunset, for an evening stroll, generally on the port road, for the sake of the fresh breeze.

Marriages are nearly always performed at four o'clock in the morning—a most uncomfortable hour to our English notions.

I was witness to one of these weddings, by torchlight, and it seemed to me more like the gathering together of a band of conspirators than a gay marriage party.

A ball was given in honour of the approaching marriage, the night before, by a friend of the young bride's, and dancing was kept up with great spirit until the small hours of the morning. As four o'clock approached, there was a slight stir, and subdued excitement to be observed ; the dancing became languid, and had

evidently lost its interest, and at length the mother of the bride, signified that it was time to be proceeding to the church.

The whole party sallied out into the moonlit streets, the bride and her father leading the way, and in a few minutes we found ourselves inside the dimly-lighted church, a couple of flaring torches being the only lights visible, with the exception of a pair of wax candles on the altar.

The first part of the ceremony was, as usual, performed at the lower end of the church, the torches casting a ghastly glare upon the pale faces of the bride and bridegroom, while all the rest of the church was shrouded in gloom.

After the ceremony was over, and the registry signed by the natives of half a dozen different countries, a select few proceeded to the bride's house, where the breakfast was laid out, just as the early dawn began to break, that most unbecoming hour to even the youngest and fairest after a night's dancing.

The newly-married pair remained in her parents' house according to the custom of the country, a month's trip being considered quite a superfluous waste of money and time in Central America.

The roads throughout the State of Salvador are too badly kept to allow of carriage exercise.

One gentleman of our acquaintance possessed an open carriage, but he had to confine his drive entirely to the port road, it being the only one fit for anything except an ox cart.

There used to be quite an excitement when this solitary vehicle dashed through the little town of Sonsonate; many of the riding horses unaccustomed to such an object and alarmed at the clatter of the wheels over the stones, would rear and snort and show a strong inclination to run away.

We had an amusing adventure in this same carriage, one June moonlight night.

We had been down to the port of Acajutta with our friends to whom it belonged, and they asked us to return to Sonsonate which is six leagues off, in their carriage, instead of on horseback. We started at seven in the evening, thinking to reach home by nine, but before we had been many miles, one of the horses gave symptoms of giving in, and at last nothing would induce him to move an inch. We were only half way from Acajutta, not even a cart or horse to be had anywhere, and no means of returning to Sonsonate except on foot. I proposed camping out for the night, but as there was nothing but the dusty high road to lie on, the proposition did not meet with any favor.

After leaving the tired horse at a small roadside hotel, we finally agreed to walk on well as we could, the remaining three leagues. Now nine miles in the tropics is no joke, for ladies especially, but fortunately the night was lovely, with a moon making everything as light as day,

and innumerable fire flies gleamed on each side of the road.

We had a mounted servant with us, and he was dispatched post haste to Sonsonate to meet us on the road with our horses, while our friend led the other carriage horse by the bridle, with now and then a muttered Spanish ejaculation from between his set teeth.

It was the height of the dry season and the dust was ankle deep, adding greatly to our fatigue, but we forgot everything as we approached a small cottage, from which proceeded the most unearthly screams and moans. The lady who was walking with me having a very courageous as well as a very humane nature, rushed to the door, expecting that at least murder was being committed, while the rest of the party stood horror struck at the dreadful sounds.

To our surprise she presently emerged with a smile on her face, informing us that it was only

a man suffering from toothache, and that she had advised him what to do for it.

After this we proceeded with frequent rests on the dusty ground, until within a mile of Sonsonate, when our five steeds hove in sight, and glad enough we were to mount once more, arriving at home at midnight.

The Indians are excessively superstitious having a firm belief in the evil eye, the influence of the moon, the bad omen of a raven's flight, and many other notions equally absurd.

An amusing story is told of an Indian guide and an European traveller.

The party were all ready for a start, when a raven happened to croak in a tree overhead. The Indian immediately threw up his engagement, saying it was impossible to proceed, after the raven had given such a warning of approaching disaster.

Bribes, expostulations, and entreaties, were equally vain, until at last the traveller got into

a furious rage, and slashed the imperturbable guide with his horsewhip. To his surprise, the Indian immediately mounted his mule, and expressed his willingness to commence the journey, as the beating was the misfortune predicted by the raven and he had now nothing further to fear.

In some parts of the country they also still hold to some of their old idolatries. A priest told me that there is a piece of wood worshipped by the Indians, who come from miles round to assist at the ceremony, and that the people are so tenacious of this old custom, devout Catholics as they seem at other times, that the priesthood are obliged to ignore the superstition.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING our stay at Santa Tecla, we were amused to find that there was a great talk of soliciting a colony of Irishmen to come and settle in the country. Tracts of Government land were to be given them, and every care and protection extended to them ; but it all ended in smoke, perhaps all the better for San Salvador, whose peaceable inhabitants might not have relished the sight of broken heads and black eyes at the end of all their *fiestas*.

Their religion being the same, would, no doubt, have been an advantage, and that was the

reason why the President thought of the most pugnacious of her Majesty's subjects for his scheme.

The President (himself a military man), was making great efforts to re-model the army. His first improvement was to put the soldiers into uniform—blue, trimmed with red, and military caps instead of the nondescript straw hats of former times ; but one thing was wanted in their costume, which made all the rest look ill to an English eye—the privates were all shoeless, their bare feet being merely bound with leatheren sandals—Indian fashion—and I was told that they would not have been able to march a mile had they been condemned to wear boots.

The officers are generally taken from the *Ladino* class, with a few exceptions, as no man worth anything will degrade himself by entering the demoralized and ill-paid army of the the Republic. The utter lack of discipline must be seen to be understood, and as long as the

Indian soldier looks down on his *Ladino* officer, and feels himself the better man of the two—what else can be expected ?

In the time of Walker's raid, with his following of cut throats of every nation, almost the only troops that fought well and bravely were the Costa Ricans, who were led into battle by a higher class of officers of purer Spanish descent.

The Indians are not lacking in courage ; but they require white officers to lead them, and instruct them in the art of fighting—of which they are profoundly ignorant. A few months later at Panama, we met three or four French officers on their way to Salvador, by the invitation of the President ; they were to instruct the army in all the French military tactics, and were most curious to hear all about the country and soldiers they were going to teach.

One of them was a colonel of infantry—a clever gentlemanly man ; another a cavalry

captain, who clashed his spurred heels together whenever he bowed to a señorita ; and two or three others of inferior grade.

I pictured to myself the sensation they would create in Salvador, more particularly amongst the ladies, accustomed only to see their own dark-skinned, dirty, and by no means refined military men. I thought, perhaps, it might lead to the army becoming the fashion, and thus inducing young men of good family to leave the *aristocratic and lucrative counter*, for the *vulgar and ill-paid profession of arms*. But these dreams were never I fear, realized, my dashing French friends being soon driven out of the country by a revolution which deprived Barrios of his power.

The principal commerce of the country is with England ; but the upper orders have a marked preference for the French nation, and this preference I especially observed during the war in the Crimea, when French gallantry

was the universal theme, whilst the equally brave conduct of the English army was coldly passed over, and any short comings made the most of. This feeling is I think to be attributed to the fact that they know more of the French upper classes, French men of war frequently finding their way up to Salvador; while the English rarely leave the South American Coasts. Everyone who has mixed in French society knows the superior class of men who enter the navy, where so many of the old noblesse of France are to be found, so we must not wonder that the people of Salvador, who rarely see any other Englishmen, but the rough and ill educated masters of merchant ships, contrast the two nations unfavorably.

They respect and admire England for her riches and enterprise, but have a wonderful idea of the melancholy and reserve of our countrymen, and at first they seemed quite surprised to find that we could talk and laugh like other mortals.

There is a seabird on the coast, of a particularly solemn deportment, which the natives have christened "the Englishman," and they say any number of these birds may be congregated together on the rocks, but not a sound proceeds from them. The *parriquita*, the smallest and most talkative of parrots, they call "the Frenchman," but as they are exceedingly fond of these amusing little birds the *sobriquet* may be considered complimentary.

Ever since Walker's expedition to Nicaragua the hatred towards Americans has been outrageous. At one time it was scarcely safe for one of that nation to travel alone, muttered imprecations and lowering looks meeting him at every turn, and they were most unwillingly received at the posadas. The slightest dispute between America and England was hailed with delight as likely to lead to a war, and perhaps to the extermination of their hated enemy, for as to the possibility of the English ever getting a

defeat, it never occurred to them, which shows that though they have no great love for England they hold her superior to every other nation in the world.

We passed several months at Santa Tecla, but at the end of that time began to sigh for the refreshing rivers and cheerful society of Sonsonate, of both of which there is a great dearth in Santa Tecla, so taking advantage of a short spell of fine weather in the month of August we set off on our return home in the same manner as we came.

The roads were of course in a fearful state after three months of incessant rains, and this made it very fatiguing for both horses and riders, but on the second day we arrived in safety at Sonsonate, which certainly felt very like an oven after Santa Tecla, but the first bath in the delicious river San Antonio quite reconciled us to the change.

We also appreciated the graceful cocoa-nuts

and fragrant orange and mango trees, after residing in a place nearly destitute of them, and the kind and warm-hearted welcome of our friends made us feel more at home than we could in any other spot of Central America.

In October of the same year, however, we were obliged to make preparations for a return to England, after an absence of eight years. It was with a profound regret that I bade adieu to many kind friends, whose affection had endeared the country to us, and I felt also, as we rode for the last time down to the seaport of Acajutta, that my eyes could never rest on a lovelier land, with its smiling plains rich in fruit trees, and its splendid ranges of majestic mountains, whose volcanic peaks seemed to pierce the azure sky above.

The sea, as usual, was very rough, making it by no means a pleasant operation to be lowered in a chair from the mole into the boat beneath, and great dexterity is required to time the moment exactly when the boat is lifted up on the

crest of a huge wave. The occupant of the chair is tumbled out in a very unceremonious manner, and in another moment the boat is down in a yawning gulf that seems about to swallow her up.

After half an hour's tossing in this boat, we were not sorry to find ourselves on board the beautiful American steamer "Guatemala," more like a gentleman's yacht in its luxurious appointments than a passenger ship. It was quite a new vessel, built expressly for this line, and contained every comfort and convenience for a tropical climate. Large, airy sleeping cabins, beautiful ventilation in every part, and a marble bath room, so that the week's voyage to Panama was as pleasant as anything at sea can be.

We touched at the port of Libertad, a few leagues from San Salvador, the next morning, but as the sea was raging, I was quite unable to go on deck to have a peep at it. I believe however it is a miserable-place, like all the seaport towns,

with only a roadstead, the same as at Acajutta, and no mole, so everything has to be taken ashore in surf boats, which are often capsized.

After rolling about in a most distracting manner for a few hours we were again under weigh, and the sea becoming calmer, I was able to get on deck and enjoy the sight of the deep blue water, just rippling under the soft fresh breeze. The deck presented the usual appearance of listless readers and animated talkers. We had a diplomatic gentleman, grave, reserved, and refined in one corner; a Lord Dundreary in another; a charming and mercurial young Spaniard who talked to all in turn; while the kind and obliging, but decidedly Yankee Captain had laid himself up on a bench, and amused himself with the fierce antics of a beautiful tiger cat that he was trying to tame.

Our next halting place was Realejo, the port of the State of Nicaragua. It is a flat, unhealthy looking town, suspiciously green, but

pretty and fertile in appearance as seen from the sea. Fever is very prevalent in the rainy season, but a Consul is obliged to reside there all the year round. The dulness of the place is excessive, as the few foreigners in the State naturally settle in the more healthy inland towns, and it is surprising how any one can be found to accept an appointment to such a wretched locality, where the only excitement is the monthly arrival of the steamer, and the glimpse of civilised life then obtained.

After a stay of a few hours we again proceeded on our way, and in two or three days arrived at San José, the port of Costa Rica. This is a flat, sandy-looking place, with the houses built nearly into the water, and it had a hot, dreary, dusty look about it, as if the inhabitants must always suffer from thirst, which I believe they do, if report speaks the truth. As we stayed one whole day here, my husband and other passengers went ashore to have a look at the town, which

they described as being poor looking, though a good deal of business is done in it, principally by English and Americans, and there is a dangerous bar at the entrance of the harbour, which makes it a hazardous undertaking to go ashore at low tide. A few more days passed pleasantly on board the 'Guatemala,' with a cloudless sky and just enough breeze to refresh us and ripple the sea, and we then found ourselves entering the lovely Bay of Panama, studded with little islands wooded to the water's edge.

Several American steamers and men-of-war of various nations were lying at anchor, giving animation to the scene, and a truly pleasant sight to any one fresh from the other deserted Central American ports. A small steamer soon made its appearance, and took the few passengers on shore. We were landed at a civilized-looking wharf, and an omnibus was in waiting to take us to an hotel, but as we jolted along the rough, narrow streets, I began to compare wild and civilized life, I fear to the

disadvantage of the latter, and it was not the first time that I had done so.

I was much pleased with the appearance of Panama, with its high balconied houses, looking so old and quaint and truly Spanish, and at our hotel, which was kept by Germans, we had tolerably comfortable rooms, though at an exorbitant price. The table was excellent, every luxury being procurable, even ices, the weekly steamer from New York bringing quantities of ice to the Isthmus, and as it has been found of the greatest benefit in fevers, it is eagerly sought after by high and low. Our stay at the hotel was very short, some hospitable friends having invited us us to their house.

The principal object of interest in Panama is the old sea wall built by the Spaniards. It is of immense strength and thickness, and a few years ago was strongly fortified and armed with beautiful brass guns, but the Government lately sold all but a few, that are quite insufficient for purpose of defence.

The rampart is the favourite place for the evening and moonlight lounge. At the latter time the view of the broad bay, all flooded with light, is indeed lovely. There is nothing remarkable about any of the churches or public buildings, with the exception of one picturesque old ruin of the first church erected by the Spaniards in Panama; the bells are most beautiful, and so wonderfully sonorous and musical in tone that there is a tradition attached to them. It is said that on contributions being requested by the King of Spain for the bells which he wished to present to the church, the ladies of the Court, in their pious zeal, had their gold and silver ornaments melted down, in order that the sound should be enriched by those precious metals, whilst offering a truly royal gift to their king.

I was much surprised to see so many negroes in Panama. The servants are nearly entirely from that race, and bitter are the complaints of dishonesty, laziness, and incurably dirty habits. Some friends of ours, with whom we lived during

our short stay at Panama, had been so disgusted with the details of housekeeping that they adopted the excellent plan, of having their breakfasts and dinners brought to them daily from the German hotel, thereby saving all the trouble and worry entailed by dishonest cooks, who consider it a regular perquisite to feed their numerous relations at their master's cost.

The price of provisions is enormous at Panama, ever since the completion of the railroad, and the influx of Californians; the reckless extravagance of the latter, and their apparent disregard of their hard won gold, being a great misfortune to the inhabitants of any town through which they pass, instantly raising, as they do, the price of everything. We found the society of Panama very pleasant; the ladies especially having a peculiar fascination of manner, and most of them sing with much taste and sweetness to the guitar. Their national song is very beautiful and spirit stirring, Simon

Bolivar being of course the subject of it. It consists of about twenty verses, some of which are very pretty. There is a more aristocratical feeling in Panama, as far as I could judge amongst the first native families, than in the other Central American States, and strangers who come without letters of introduction cannot get an *entrée* into the best circle. A great many Americans, and a few English, are settled in the town, but mix very little, I am told, with the natives.

After a pleasant stay of twelve days, the Californian steamer arrived, so we prepared to make a start for Colon, or Aspinwall, as the Americans call it, to meet the New York steamer, which was only waiting for the Californian passengers. As we wished to see something of Colon, we started, accompanied by some friends, a day sooner than was necessary, and it was with much interest that I found myself crossing the narrow Isthmus that divides the two great oceans. The railway carriages are arranged *à l'Americaine*,

without any divisions, and reminded me more of a church than anything else, with the aisle down the middle, and the pews on each side; for a hot country this certainly has its advantages, being infinitely cooler, and the comfort of an occasional promenade down the whole length of the train is great. After so many years of horseback travelling, it seemed very strange to be rushing through the wild country at the rate of thirty miles an hour, and the face of our Salvador servant, whom we had brought with us, was quite a picture. As the train started with its shrill whistle, alarm, awe, and amazement, were all vividly expressed, and we had travelled some miles before he recovered his equanimity. The different stations on the road are very pretty and picturesque, but look strangely out of keeping with the wild, desolate country. With the exception of the station houses, scarcely a habitation is to be seen along the whole forty miles. Jungle and swamp, and an occasional wooded hill of no considerable height, is the sort

of country through which the train rushes to the shores of the Atlantic.

Hundreds of unfortunate Irishmen fell victims to the deadly climate in the construction of this railway. As soon as one batch was swept away, another was sent from New York to fill their place, until the forty miles—as fatal to life as many a battle field—were successfully completed. I was told that in many places the men had to work up to their knees in water, while jungle had to be cleared and valleys filled up with immense cost and labour, but the Company is now reaping a golden harvest, the Californians preferring this route home to that through Nicaragua and Greytown, as being more direct and less troublesome.

In an hour's time we came in sight of the Atlantic, and of the strange-looking wooden town of Colon, with its flimsy-painted houses gleaming bright in the sunshine, forming such a contrast to venerable Spanish-looking Panama.

In Colon everything is American, hotels, shops (or stores as they are called), and people. The Yankee twang resounds on every side, and scarcely anyone of Spanish descent is to be seen. The lower class seemed to consist almost entirely of blacks—I suppose originally from Jamaica. The principal hotel is a very fine one, built quite in the American style, with a capital *table d'hôte*, capable of accommodating an immense number of visitors; a most luxurious table is kept, everything being excellent in quality, and cooked to perfection, the hotel belonging to an Irishman, who prides himself not a little on the style of the whole thing in such a place as Colon.

There being no room in the hotel for us, the hospitable proprietor gave us up his own private house for the night, and would not hear of any remuneration.

Before dinner, we and our kind Panama friends sallied out to have a look at the town, and the beautiful promenade by the sea-shore, which was

just completed by subscription. The town itself is ugly and uninteresting, as all new American towns are ; but the road by the sea is lovely. Groups of graceful cocoa-nut trees are left here and there, their stems nearly washed by the crested waves as they roll in. The road is beautifully kept, broad and even, and pretty detached houses lie a little back from it, as clean and bright-looking as paint can make them. All have Venetian blinds, and pretty shady porticoes ; and I can fancy how pleasant it must be to sit out of an evening and enjoy the sight and sound of the great rolling waves as they burst on the shore.

One part of the road lies through a beautiful forest, and here, under the magnificent trees, seats are placed for the weary. This promenade is, of course, the favourite resort of all Aspinwall at sunset ; indeed, it is the only place where you can walk with any pleasure, as the streets are

very dirty, and in the rainy season almost impasible from mud.

The climate is dreadfully sickly, and so fatal to women, that as soon as the rains commence, the Americans send off their wives and children to New York, where they remain until December, when the place becomes comparatively healthy. What a life for the unfortunate married people ; but what will not be endured for the sake of making money ?

The houses are beautifully furnished, and the merchants seem to be doing a thriving business, so that no doubt, in a few years, it will be a large and prosperous town, though horribly unhealthy it must always be, for it is built upon a swamp.

The rainy season was nearly over when we were there ; but an occasional storm still made its appearance, and on our way back to our hotel we were caught in one of these. Before

we could reach shelter, the streets were a bog, and we sank ankle deep every step we took. If one heavy shower has this effect upon the spongy ground, what must it be when the rain pours every day down in floods?

The mosquitoes even in the dry season are formidable enemies to any European; so venomous is their sting that every bite becomes an ulcer, particularly on children. My little boy was two months in recovering from the effects of one night at Aspinwall.

We were not sorry on the following day to bid adieu to the dreary spot, and embark on board the "Baltic," the freight of Californians being already on board—for no other passengers are allowed to set foot in the vessel until these gentry are comfortably installed, having had the choice of all the cabins.

What a chaos the steamer presented with its thousand passengers, hundreds of children choking up every passage, and the decks so crowded

that it was a matter of difficulty to thread one's way, but fortunately, all had recovered from their sea-sickness, so that horror was not added to the stifling heat and other discomforts of the "Baltic," which was built originally for the American line between New York and England; for which reason there was not a single contrivance for coolness, warmth being the one thing thought of. The consequence was that the atmosphere of the cabins and ladies' saloon was so fearfully oppressive, that I wonder the poor little children on board survived it.

I would advise no one, at least no lady, ever to return to Europe *via* New York, unless absolutely obliged to do so, for no words can express the amount of misery and suffering condensed in that one week's voyage ; and the sudden transition also from excessive heat to the extreme of cold, must be very trying to the constitution.

Three days before arriving at New York, the sky seems almost suddenly to change from the

deep tropical azure to a dreary milk and water hue ; the sun himself seems to become an insignificant atom of light instead of the blazing giant he was, and everything looks terribly sad, cheerless, and wild.

We arrived at New York at mid-night, and before eight o'clock next morning every passenger had landed, the tardy ones being nearly swept out of their cabins by the impatient stewards, whose utter want of courtesy is something to be remembered for ever.

So ended the most disagreeable voyage I ever made in all my travels, and those alone who have experienced the same trials can imagine how we revelled in New York comfort and luxury, which is carried to perfection in the hotels.

In a few short weeks we were in England.

THE EARTHQUAKE OF SAN SALVADOR,

APRIL 16TH, 1854.

(Page 65.)

NOTE.—One shock had occurred about half-an-hour before the dreadful convulsion which destroyed the city, and this warning, by causing the inhabitants to rush out into the streets, saved many lives.

The quiet City slept,
No storm was in the sky,
But brilliant stars their vigil kept,
Glowing like lamps on high.

Purple the depths of night,
And still the sleeping air,
Save for fresh murmurs soft and light,
Of water everywhere.

The quiet City slept—
At least, to outward view ;
But some, they smil'd, and others wept ;
With some the minutes flew.

When hark ! the church tolls ten !
Soft—solemn—clear—it rings,
Floating o'er mount, and stream, and glen
As if the sound had wings.

Scarce was the echo o'er,
When nature felt the throes
Of fiery life. Bursting the door
That prison'd her, she rose,

In smoke, and steam, and dust,
In shakings to and fro,
Cracking the hot and parchéd crust
That hides the flame below !

The houses totter, fall,
Churches are rent in twain,
Crumbles to dust the massive wall,
And Death and Ruin reign.

All nature feels the crash,
And sights and sounds of pain
Scare like the lurid lightning's flash,
And madden ev'ry brain.

The dying and the dead
Mix with the living stream,
Lovers that yesterday were wed
Wake from their blissful dream.

All throng the open streets,
With wild and startled air;
And ev'ry heart in anguish beats,
Or finds its strength in prayer.

Ten seconds brief are fled,
The rapid shocks are o'er,
And dust and ashes wide are spread
O'er scenes so fair before.

Dark chasms yawn around,
Trees from their roots are torn,
And ruins strew the burning ground,
Where late the flow'rs were born.

The husband's breaking heart
Calls for the young, the dead,
Whose tender soul of his was part,
But now for ever fled.

Mothers for children mourn,
Like Rachel, comfortless!
Death from their circling arms hath torn
The babes they lov'd to bless.

Hundreds, in mute despair,
Gaze on each ruin'd home,
Then wild lamentings pierce the air,
While want and rapine roam.

Priests hold aloft the cross,
 Sign of redeeming love,
 And bid men seek, 'mid ev'ry loss,
 To fix their hopes above.

The hearts so dead before,
 Wake to a sense of sin,
 And loudly now for grace implore,
 And peace, and pardon win.

The trembling earth is still
 When dawns another day,
 And o'er a scene most drear and chill
 Glimmers the sun's red ray.

Is this the city proud
 Where wealth and pleasure dwelt?
 This crumbling church the same whose crowd
 In pious worship knelt?

Are these the homes so fair,
 Where love delighted smil'd?
 This sulph'rous breath the same sweet air
 Which toilsome hours beguil'd?

Alas! the same—the same;
 One hour of wild dismay
 Upon the stately city came,
 So fair but yesterday!

The homes where children play'd,
 The lovers' leafy bow'r,
 The churches where the faithful pray'd
 All felt that earthquake's pow'r.

So floods of passion come
 In fire to rend the soul,
 So lie the ruined hearts of some
 O'er which grief's earthquakes roll.

The heart is still the same,
 But turn'd to ashes! dust!
 Burnt by some deep consuming flame
 Like Earth's volcanic crust.

THE HOUR OF REST.

NOTE—Near the Guerranal, a mountain gully in Salvador, there stands a cotton tree of extraordinary size and beauty, and beneath its shade travellers find a cool resting-place even in the hottest part of the day. The writer has lost her memorandum of the dimensions of this gigantic tree, and fears to hazard a statement that might seem exaggerated, as only those who have seen these enormous trees can form any idea of their size. She remembers at the time she rested under this particular tree, her impression was that a regiment of soldiers might have sheltered themselves beneath its branches.

Alone it stands, that Monarch of the woods !
 Like some cathedral vast, its leafy dome
 Towers against the Heaven's celestial blue,
 While from its verdant depths soft whispers come.

A world of shadow lies beneath its boughs,
 And cool and green the daylight then declines,
 Except where on the sward, a brilliant gleam
 Its struggling way has marked in broken lines.

Countless as stars above, the dewy leaves
 Reach like a glist'ning curtain to the ground,
 While giant branches rear their arms on high,
 Fed by the rains, by centuries embrown'd.

The air is full of song, of tender trills,
 Of many long drawn out melodious notes ;
 And Heaven's choristers their anthems sing
 With quiv'ring plumage spread, and fluttering throats.

There sweet Sonsontes* chant their magic lay,
 Others responding from that leafy screen,
 And birds like jewels gleam upon the wing
 Matching the sapphire's and the ruby's sheen.

* Mocking-bird.

Beside that mighty trunk two children play,
 Lovely and happy as the birds above,
With flowing golden hair and azure eyes,
 Their parents watching them with tender love.

The weary horses stand beneath the shade
 With languid eyes half clos'd and heads that droop,
And on the grass the sunburnt guides recline
 Forming a dusky background to the group.

Sweet hour of rest ! of cool delicious rest
 For thoughtful woman and for working man,
For happy childhood, making play a toil,
 For faithful steeds.—Rest all—rest while ye can.

So in life's journey shady spots there are,
 Where for a while the soul can rest in peace
After some conflict won, some sorrow pass'd.
 When Christ has told the warring winds to cease.

'Tis then God's voice is heard amongst the trees,
 And in the stormy ocean's ebb and flow,
In ev'ry echo of the mountain range,
 On frowning height, in smiling vale below.

Beneath the shadow of His love we rest
 Secure from passion's scorching sun the while,
From sorrow's cloud, from sin's defiling dust,
 Feeling His presence, conscious of His smile.



PART II.



A GLIMPSE AT MADEIRA AND THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

My husband having been appointed Consul at Lagos in 1860, he went there first alone, and wrote to me to go to Madeira with my little girl and await there his summons to join him. After a stormy passage in the month of November, Madeira lay before me—the place of all others, that I had long wished to see.

How lovely it looked as we approached it, with its towering hills, and verdant slopes, and pretty cheerful houses, half embedded in trees !

The harbour was crowded with boats, going to and from our Queen's yacht, which had just landed the Empress of Austria, and looked very beautiful lying at anchor in the blue waters of the bay.

Wonderful little boys, without a stitch of clothing on them, swam round the ship like so many young porpoises, diving for the silver coins thrown to them by the passengers—which were distinctly seen, so clear is the water, lying on the yellow sand.

After waiting a tedious time for the visit of the custom-house and health-officer, we were at length allowed to land—a somewhat disagreeable undertaking in Madeira when the wind blows, as then the breakers near shore are very apt to upset the boat that trusts to them.

We were fortunate, however, in having a calm day, and the third wave bore us high and dry on the shingly beach of Funchal.

The instant I set foot on shore, I fancied myself once more in Portugal ; there were the creaking ox-carts, the lumbering carriages drawn by the same animals, the sun-burnt drivers with their round felt-hats and short jackets, the women with the dark stuff petticoats and snow-white handkerchief on their heads, there also was the market-place with its fountain of purest water, the plaza with its avenue of trees ; even the climate seemed the same with its azure sky, and soft warm breeze laden with the perfume of flowers ; and last, though not least, there were the very same little ragged urchins, clamouring for *cinco reis*, the most importunate and impudent of their race.

After the ox-carriage had rattled us over the cruel stones we arrived at the boarding-house, where I intended to reside for a time. A small door admitted us at once into a lovely garden, full of roses and other flowers in bloom, and commanding from its trellised walks an en-

chanting view of the harbour, and miles of blue sea.

I secured a couple of large airy rooms on the ground floor, with windows opening both on land and sea views. They were prettily furnished in white and rose colour, and cool straw-mats of very fine texture covered the floors—welcome substitutes for carpets.

The dining-room up-stairs was a noble apartment, opening with French windows on another garden at the back of the house. The latter was not of great extent, but the view of the mountain that seemed to rise almost abruptly from its edge was very beautiful.

Far, far above us, gleamed the white church of Nossa Señora del Monte, with its flight of many steps, and the black fir forest almost encircling it.

Lower down the hill, bright green patches of sugar-cane were very conspicuous; the culture of this plant having quite superseded that of the

vine since the grape disease. Beautiful creepers are also now frequently seen, trained on the trellises, where the vine used to flourish, adding greatly to the beauty of these embowered walks. Some of these creepers are of such brilliant dyes, that the eye is almost dazzled by their splendour as they fall in graceful festoons over the grey stone walls.

A Madeira garden comprises everything most beautiful in nature, improved by art. In addition to the flowers and shady walks, its terraces command the most glorious views over land and sea. The steep nature of the ground necessitates this construction of the gardens, and the eye looks down upon a succession of brilliant plateaus, one beneath another, where the camellias and orange trees mingle their foliage.

On one side of the steep streets, high granite walls are built, and these have the advantage of casting a pleasant shade on the narrow stoney

hills, which would otherwise be insupportably hot and fatigueing.

The fashionable promenade had lately been completed, by subscription ; the late Queen Adelaide having, I believe, started the undertaking with a munificent donation.

It is a broad, smooth, civilized-looking road, winding round the edge of the cliffs, and commands lovely and extensive views.

Here, at sunset, are to be seen all the *élite* of Funchal, mostly on horseback, but a few also lumbering along in the ox-carriage. Pedestrians are few, and far between, the tremendous hills daunting nearly everyone from much exercise on foot.

Almost every hired horse is accompanied by its running footman, who is armed with a long switch, with which he is incessantly whisking off the flies. He keeps pace with his horse in a wonderful manner, trotting or walking, as the humour of its rider prompts him.

It amused me very much to see Englishmen riding with this appendage at their heels, as if they could not take care of themselves, but custom is everything, and many assured me they would not know how to get on without their attendant. The horses, also, are so accustomed to have the flies whisked off for them, that the poor things do not know how to do it with their own tails.

There are several shady plazas in the lower part of the town. In the principal one a fine military band plays twice a week, on which occasions there is scarcely standing room, so great is the love of music among the Portuguese. Rows of chairs are placed for the ladies beneath the trees, which are quickly filled, principally by the Portuguese ladies, all *en grande toilette*, while groups of our countrywomen, on horseback, ride up and down on the outskirt of the crowd.

It is quite a treat to listen to such a band beneath such a sky. Every man who performs

seems a born musician, and the most difficult Italian overtures are executed in a manner worthy of an orchestra at a first rate opera.

The English residents have a handsome club-house, comprising ball room, reading room, and library. The Portuguese have also their Assembly rooms, where balls and concerts are held.

There is a large English resident society, and this of course is greatly increased by the winter influx of visitors. A great number of Germans were in Funchal when I arrived, the Empress of Austria having made the place fashionable for all the invalids throughout the fatherland. Her Majesty won all hearts at Madeira by her beauty and her grace of manner.

I used frequently to see her driving about in her ox carriage, which mode of conveyance caused her, I heard, great amusement on first arriving at Funchal.

When she disembarked from the yacht one of

these lumbering equipages was waiting at the landing place to convey her to her house, and when she at length understood that it was meant for her use, her gravity quite gave way. It appears that in Austria condemned criminals are always taken to the scaffold in vehicles drawn by oxen.

Those invalids who object to the wearisome ox carriage are borne in hammocks slung on a long pole and carried by two men.

Basket sledges are also much used for descending the hills. These are strange-looking conveyances, resembling very large arm chairs, with a low back; they can accommodate three persons comfortably, and are pushed, or rather held, by two men behind, who regulate its speed by a rope on each side. They glide down the slippery, precipitous pavements, with great velocity, the men having to run at a great speed to keep up with them. Occasionally an overturn occurs, but not frequently, and as the sledge is so near

the ground, it is seldom any serious injury is inflicted.

It is an exhilarating and pleasant way of getting over the ground, and far preferable to either carriage or hammock in its smooth, gliding motion.

Soon after my arrival I made an excursion with some friends to see the Cabo Girão, considered, I have heard, one of the highest promontories in the world. It rises a sheer precipice from the sea; and as our boat lay beneath in its mighty shadow, the height we looked up at made me giddy.

We landed at the miserable little dirty village which lay at the foot of the mountain, and there the gentlemen hired hammocks to ascend the promontory. Another lady of the party and myself did not feel equal to the undertaking, it being the hottest time of the day, and the mountain destitute of trees; so, after a little hesitation, we agreed to return to Funchal, not by the boat, however, but

on foot, as we had each felt a *soupçon* of sea-sickness.

We neither of us knew the way, but as we kept Nossa Señora del Monte as our beacon, we knew we could not go far wrong.

The scenery was magnificent, making us forget our fatigue, and as I had the good fortune of being with a companion who knew when to be silent, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Ranges of blue mountains, dark chasms, and fruitful valleys surrounded us on every side, and as we had plenty of time before us, we took many a rest by the way, feeling as if we could never gaze long enough at so much beauty.

Occasionally we met a stray peasant, and as I knew sufficient of the language to make myself understood, we never lost our way, and arrived at about four o'clock in Funchal, very tired, but pleased with our exploit.

The market-place in Funchal is a gay and animated scene, in the early hours of the morn-

ing ; it is crowded with the country people from all the villages round, bringing in their fruit and vegetables for sale, and I was pleased to see once more the various costumes of Portugal ; amongst others, the scarlet cloth cape of Braga, and the wide black felt hats, adorned with tufts round the low crown.

All sorts of things are sold in the market-place, besides eatables ; shoes, baskets of every description, some very pretty, and many articles of coarse clothing.

The fish are remarkable for their brilliant colours ; I have seen them of the brightest crimson, blue, and violet. In fact the sun in Madeira seems to paint everything, in hues, brighter than elsewhere. The shops are famous also for their lovely feather flowers, and specimens of embroidery and crochet work are exhibited in their windows.

The Portuguese excel in needlework of every kind, and are as great in hemming and stitching

as they are in fancy work. Their crochet is remarkably fine and delicate, looking almost like Honiton lace, and their knitted shawls are very pretty and elegant, and so fine, that they can be passed through a ring.

The feather flowers of Madeira are almost as beautiful as the natural ones, and are made entirely from the plumage of birds. The humming-birds contribute largely to form these lovely wreaths, and the brilliant colours of their plumage vie with the flowers they feed on. The greatest taste is displayed in the arrangement of the wreaths, and nature is copied so closely, that it requires almost the touch to convince one that the flowers are artificial.

Though so many invalids resort to Madeira, no impression of gloom is left on the mind. Cheerful faces abound, and everyone seems enjoying life to the utmost. Even of the consumptive patients the greater number are able to take a

daily ride, accompanied by their friends ; and the exquisite beauty of the climate seems to have a renovating effect on everyone.

The English church is very pretty, but of peculiar construction, being of a rotunda shape, supported by pillars. The music is very good, principally, I believe, amateur, and the church is so well ventilated, that no inconvenience is felt from the heat of the climate. It is surrounded by a lovely garden, and scarcely looks like a church outside, having neither turreted spire, nor belfry.

The Presbyterians have their Scotch church in another part of the town ; it is a neat and tasteful building, of white and grey stone ; and the very high church party have hired a room where service is performed, much to the surprise of the Portuguese, who cannot understand the petty differences that divide our Anglican church. With them heretics are heretics *voilà tout !*

I was a little disappointed with the English cemetery, having heard it was very beautiful. It is kept, certainly, in the most perfect order, but there are few fine monuments, and the stones on the graves have nearly all the form of coffins, which gives a most melancholy look to the whole place.

I much preferred the Portuguese cemetery, with its rows of large sombre cypresses, and numerous stone crosses gleaming white amongst the dark foliage.

The patois [spoken by the lower orders in Madeira is very ugly, and so different from the Portuguese language when purely spoken, that I had some difficulty in understanding it. The “Z,”—a letter frequently used in the language—is always pronounced in Madeira as “sh,” so that they seem like a set of “ole clo’ men,” talking together.

The water carriers are an extraordinary race of men, and all have a particular song, which

they sing in a high nasal discordant key, as they slouch along with their large water jars poised on their shoulders.

The water in Madeira is deliciously cold, pure, and sparkling, and is brought from the mountains by means of an aqueduct. This latter is a great work, and must have cost much time and labour to complete it, but most pleasant it is as you toil up the steep burning hills, to hear the soft fresh gurgle of water, pouring impetuously down its stone reservoir.

Everyone visits the church called "Nossa Señora del Monte," so I felt bound to do the same, and was amply repaid for the toilsome ascent by the enchanting view obtained from the spot where it is erected.

The church is an exceedingly ugly white washed building, approached from the road by a long flight of broad stone steps. The interior has nothing in it worth seeing, but the eye turns away from man's work to God's, and is satisfied.

The view is so extensive, commands such miles of sea and land, that you feel almost in the clouds. You look down on mountain tops, and smiling valleys, and blooming gardens, until at last in the far distance, the eye rests on Funchal, girt by its belt of azure sea. Behind, still higher mountains are piled, but the atmosphere is so transparently clear that the tops appear above the lower clouds.

The padre lives near his church, and presented us each with a choice bouquet from his garden, inviting us at the same time to rest in his summer house. I could not help envying him his domain, lonely as it was, and thinking how beautiful the scene before us must look, lighted up by the rising sun, or flooded by moonlight. What a long column of silver or gold must dance on the distant ocean; what gleams of light, and black shadows, on mount, valley and tree!

CHAPTER II.

IN the beginning of February I received a summons from my husband to join him in Africa, so, hastily making my arrangements, I left Madeira in the mail steamer for the west coast.

I embarked in the midst of the greatest deluge of rain that I have ever seen out of the tropics.

The harbour was crested with foam, and the task of getting into the boat, which was to convey me on board, was by no means a pleasant

one. I expected every instant to see it capsized in the great rolling breakers, but I fortunately got on board the steamer without a wetting, though feeling very discouraged at such an outset to my voyage.

The storm raged throughout the night, and for a time we were in great danger and narrowly escaped losing one of our boats. Towards morning, however, the sky cleared, and we entered the harbour of Teneriffe with a rough sea, but brilliant sunshine; dark, heavy clouds shut out the peak from our view, which was as great a disappointment to me, as anything could be in my sea-sick and miserable condition.

The island looks very beautiful from the harbour, but I was too ill to go on shore as I had intended, so was obliged to content myself by looking on the strangely shaped hills, over which the black clouds were scudding at mad speed.

Teneriffe is not nearly so fertile looking as

Madeira, the eye missing the luxuriant gardens, and groups of trees, but the form of the hills is very grand and wild, and a tree would seem almost out of place.

After a delay of a few hours we resumed our voyage, the weather becoming every day hotter, and the air losing the clearness and purity that makes the climate of Madeira so delicious.

The atmosphere as we approached the Gambia assumed a reddish hue, and a hot mist hung like a low cloud on the horizon. This appearance in the air is caused by the particles of red sand from the great desert, which are blown to the coast by the Harmattan wind, a hot easterly blast that seems to scorch the skin.

On the eighth day from Teneriffe we reached the low shores of Bathurst, the first glimpse of African shore that I had seen. It looks very uninviting from the water, with its flat dull looking beach and ugly houses almost rising from

the water's edge; I believe, however, that there are some fine houses in the town, and a good trade is done here in palm oil, and ground nuts.

A great quantity of the latter were shipped, and I was induced from curiosity to taste one of the nuts, but found it so exceedingly nasty, that I did not repeat the experiment.

I have heard they are a great article of food amongst the inhabitants, and they are also given to pigs and poultry.

The Gambia is said to be one of the most unhealthy spots on the coast, and it has the appearance of being so, with its low swampy shores barely rising from the water.

A few negroes came on board, but they seemed a far more civilised set than those farther down the coast, and therefore not half so amusing and interesting.

After one day in this broiling harbour, we again proceeded on our voyage, and some days elapsed before we came in sight of Sierra Leone.

This is a lovely spot, with wooded heights, and blue shadowy mountains, taking the form of a lion couchant, and the harbour is a beautiful sheet of water, but the heat of it is intense, shut in, as it is, by high hills on every side excepting one.

The steamer had no sooner anchored than we were surrounded by the long canoes from shore, filled with natives, who kept up the most incessant gibbering and singing.

I was looking over the side of the vessel with my little girl, watching the swift paddling of a very large canoe, when we were startled by suddenly becoming the object of an ovation. Twenty pairs of wild, gleaming eyes were fixed on us, and the men then burst out into an extempore song, of which my little girl and myself were the subject.

These songs are nothing but a repetition of the same words, all chanted together in a sort of wild recitative, and not without a certain musical cadence.

I went on shore with some of my fellow passengers to have a peep at the town, and was much pleased with its general appearance. We went to some of the principal shops, and finally strolled through the market-place, which was crowded with buyers and sellers.

The most picturesque groups met the eye at every turn, and as every tribe has its distinct costume, our walk was a most interesting one.

Some of the men were very handsome, with fine, regular features and stately figures. Most of them wore the wide Turkish trouser and a toga flowing gracefully from one shoulder, with white or coloured turbans twisted round their heads.

Some of these togas were snow white, others crimson, or striped orange and green, and altogether they formed groups that any painter would have loved to sketch.

The women were almost equally picturesque, with their brilliant handkerchiefs knotted round

their heads, and their suits of many colours, but their faces were not nearly so handsome as the men's.

The market is well supplied with heaps of tempting fruit and vegetables, all ridiculously cheap. One of the passengers hired a boy with a basket to make some purchases, and to our great amusement we found presently two boys in our train, the smallest of them having been hired by the other to do his work. It was so truly African that we all laughed.

At one of the stalls we saw a strange sight—a black woman in a rage; I thought at first she was mad, and did not at all like getting into her neighbourhood, but we were told by the bystanders that her state was only caused by passion, another market women having insulted her. She paced up and down near her stall like an enraged hyena, uttering the most fearful yells, and what must have been imprecations, only we fortunately did not understand her dreadful lan-

guage. Her face was distorted in the most frightful manner, and she flung her long bony arms about like a maniac. I never saw such a terrible exhibition of savage rage, but fortunately the object of her wrath was out of her reach, or I am sure murder would have been committed.

On our way to the house of one of the Sierra Leone missionaries, where we were going to spend the day, we passed the newly-built cathedral, a large, but ugly yellow building, which I have heard has cost a great sum of money, with very little to show for it in the way of beauty or decoration.

Sierra Leone looks like one large garden, with its broad, red gravel walks, and groups of trees. In many of the streets these last have been left on each side of the way, making delightful shady avenues, intermingled with prettily built houses, all intertwined with flowering creepers, and each with their wide portico. The missionary's

house was very pretty, surrounded by its garden, and with plenty of large windows and doors to admit the breeze.

When the heat of the day was past, we sallied out to see the English chapel and school-house; the former is a very plain wooden building, innocent of all adornment, but well ventilated and capable of accommodating a great many people. The schools are flourishing, as the natives of Sierra Leone are very anxious to give their children some education, but we had not time to visit them.

After taking a short walk in the environs, which are very pretty, we returned on board our ship, just as the short twilight was giving place to night.

The heat was tremendous on board that night, and aggravated by the coal dust, which impregnated the whole air, the ship having coaled in our absence.

We were glad next morning, at an early hour, to bid adieu to this lovely, though broiling place, hoping to find a cooler breeze at sea. The difference, however, was very slight, and for the next two days the fierce rays of the sun seemed to pierce to the very marrow of our bones. The tar melted between the boards of the deck, and not a breath of air stirred the unruffled sea, which reflected back the glare of the blue heavens, until the sight ached. Strong men reclined on the straw chairs on deck, gasping for breath, and an almost unbroken silence prevailed.

It was too hot either to speak, eat, or sleep, the three great means of passing time on board ship; smoking even, seemed at a discount, and so the weary hours crept on, until Cape Patmas came to view.

A cooler breeze now springing up, every one revived under its influence, and crowded to the side nearest land to have a look at the seaport of Liberia.

Crowds of canoes immediately put off from land, and we were surrounded by real *bona fide* savages, men adorned with feathers stuck in their wool, and strange looking armlets, and anklets of bone, and beads, with no other clothing worth speaking of.

They were the most wonderful swimmers I ever saw; the great waves constantly upset their light canoes, but they would swim after them, right them again, and scramble in, just as if nothing had happened.

We were soon boarded by a crowd of these wild looking men, all grinning and gesticulating like monkeys; some of them came with a few vegetables and fruit for sale, but the greater part were empty handed, evidently only coming for the sake of the expedition.

We only stayed a few hours in this place, and therefore were unable to go on shore, even had it looked sufficiently inviting to tempt us. It struck me as being very ugly and un-

interesting after Sierra Leone, the land much lower, and less wooded, but higher than that of the Gambia.

I have heard that the free blacks are getting on very well in their republic of Liberia, and that many of the merchants are amassing large fortunes, and send their children to England to be educated. Many from Sierra Leone are now settled there, and are helping to civilise the original inhabitants. The only class who elude all endeavours of this kind are the Kroomen, chiefly known on the coast as boatmen, who lead a wild roving life, and who are as untameable as the billows on which they live.

After weighing anchor, a number of these men still continued on board, having left their canoes under the care of some friends in the harbour. Cape Patmas was fading in the distance, but still they lingered, until a stern order from the captain made them rush to the side of the vessel and leap overboard like so many deer. They

swam with astonishing rapidity to the distant harbour, their round, black heads dotting the blue sea in every direction.

In three days we arrived at Cape Coast, considered one of the most deadly spots in Africa.

It has a fearfully hot, dusty look, seen from the water. Not a blade of grass, not a green tree grows on its barren soil, and the great granite castle, built right down on the sea shore, glares with a sort of white heat.

The land is fringed with a line of raging breakers, disagreeable to cross, even in the dry season, but dangerous during the rains.

The great heat and difficulty of landing deterred me from making the attempt, though some ladies on board did venture to do so.

There is nothing of interest to be seen beyond the castle, and the grave of poor L. E. L., to which spot travellers generally make a pilgrimage.

While the passengers were on shore a stiff

breeze arose, which lashed the harbour into a very tumultuous state, and rendered the getting on board the steamer again so very disagreeable an operation, that I was heartily glad I had not ventured on shore when I saw the poor ladies scarcely able to stand in the narrow canoe, and surrounded by a set of excited gesticulating savages.

They were almost as wild a looking set of men as those at Cape Patmas, but a little tamed down by frequent association with the white man.

A great chief came off in the evening to pay a visit to the steamer, gorgeously apparelled, and looking very dignified under his huge crimson umbrella. He sat by himself, talking to no one, and looking very much like a great painted idol, so immovable was his position.

One day's steaming brought us to Accra, a

fresher, greener place than Cape Coast, but very uninteresting in appearance.

I believe good cattle and horses are obtained here, the pasturage being very fair for the coast, and the place is famous for its lovely birds, cages full of which are brought to the steamers for sale.

Some exquisite little creatures were kindly presented to my child by one of the passengers. Their cage was very small, but twenty tiny birds found room in it. Ten of them rested together on each perch. The upper tier were jet black, with bright yellow bills and feet, and were round and plump, but no bigger than humming birds. The other ten were still more beautiful, with dove-coloured wings and breasts, and bright scarlet heads and beaks, and were as small, but more delicately-shaped than the black ones.

To my great annoyance, the slight cane cage in which they were confined got broken to pieces

between Accra and Lagos, and all my little prisoners made their escape.

I was surprised to find how much cooler it became as we neared Lagos; a strong breeze refreshed us, and though the sun was still hotter than was pleasant, we no longer suffered from the stifling heat we had experienced at Sierra Leone.

It is only one day's voyage from Accra to Lagos, and great was my joy when a low yellow shore, scarcely perceptible in the distance, was pointed out to me as my destination.

No large ship can enter the harbour, on account of a great sandbank, which stretches nearly across its mouth, so our steamer anchored in the roadstead, and as the sea was very calm, we were not rolled about in the usually distracting manner.

A slight line of foam accross the entrance of the harbour showed us where the breakers were, ready to be lashed into fury when the rainy season commenced. It is dangerous, even in the summer, for any boat except a canoe to

pass through that track of foam, but occasionally men-of-war boats do venture, and several melancholy accidents happened in consequence.

My husband came in a large, well-manned canoe to fetch me, and we passed the bar with perfect safety, the last wave carrying us with a dash into the calm, still harbour of Lagos.

CHAPTER III.

My new home commanded a view of a noble sheet of water, with low green shores nearly encircling it. The boughs of the trees dipped in the waves, and the distant river, narrowing as it went, gleamed like silver amid the foliage.

My first impressions of the place were not unfavorable; above all I was pleased with my house, so freshly painted, and adorned for my reception, with its nice piece of garden full of oleander and acacia trees; the latter appearing to grow wild in Lagos.

The rooms seemed deliciously cool and pleasant after the burning hot ship I had left, and I enjoyed the wide roofed verandah, which ran the whole length of the house.

A broad, well kept road slightly raised from the beach is the one promenade in Lagos, and the merchants' houses are built a little way back, commanding a fine view of the harbour and sea.

This is the new part of the town, and it is considered far healthier than the old, which lies up the river, and is almost entirely inhabited by natives, whose dirty habits increase the natural unhealthiness of the spot.

These houses near the harbour mouth are well built, most of them surrounded by pretty gardens, tastefully laid out, but the rearing of flowers requires a great deal of care and attention on account of the sandy soil and scorching sun.

The beautiful mansion built by an Italian

merchant, is worthy of mention, but seems almost out of place at Lagos. I was told that the owner had brought Italian workmen from Genoa to complete the inside of it. The floors are nearly all of inlaid marble, and pictures by the best modern Italian masters adorn the walls, most of them battle pieces taken during the late war of independence. The house is beautifully furnished throughout, and the rooms so large and lofty that the heat of the climate is rendered endurable.

During the time I was at Lagos, there were no streets properly so called, nothing but sandy lanes with scattered houses, built at each side, without any regard to regularity, and it was an arduous undertaking to get from my house to church, at mid-day, through the scorching sand, which seemed to burn the feet, though it was only a five minutes' walk.

The latter is a rude building with rough mud

walls of great thickness and a sloping thatched roof.

There are a few pews at the side of the church nearest the altar, but the rest of it is occupied by rows of benches entirely filled by school children and the native population.

I was much interested one Sunday in hearing the communion service read in the native language. It is a soft beautiful dialect full of vowels apparently, and yet very forcible. There were crowds of communicants, but it struck me they came more out of curiosity, than from any real understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper; and this opinion was afterwards confirmed by what I heard of the so called converts to Christianity.

A dreadful old woman, a mass of leprosy, was amongst the communicants, and took her place with others at the altar. The horrible disease was additionally revolting in contrast to her

black skin, but her neighbours did not seem to dislike her proximity in the least, which struck me as very strange, and unnatural.

I had heard much of the natural talent of the negroes for music and singing, and therefore was much disappointed at the way in which the hymns and psalms were murdered. There was no organ, but the school children howled in the most discordant tones, without the slightest attempt at either time or tune, in a manner that suggested ideas not quite consistent with Christian charity. The sermon is generally preached in English, but occasionally it is interpreted sentence by sentence, for the benefit of the natives, an exceedingly tedious process to listen to.

There is a Wesleyan Church also established in Lagos which I have heard is better attended by the natives than the Episcopal. It is strange that the converts to Christianity

amongst the African race are nearly all dissenters.

I was surprised to find that there was no Roman Catholic church in the place, notwithstanding that the greater number of Europeans settled in Lagos are of that faith, and when speaking of this to a Portuguese merchant, he only gave an expressive shrug, and said with a smile,

“ Ah! we have not time for all that here.” An answer that made a deep impression on me, in a place where every one is living in the shadow of death.

I have been told, however, that this feeling is common in all the places on the west coast.

Knowing that their lives must necessarily be short ones, most of the Europeans drown care by incessant occupation or amusement. One very sickly season in Sierra Leone was famous for its number of gay balls, and recreations of

every kind, though many were dancing on the edge of the grave.

A gun boat is always stationed in the harbour for the protection of the white inhabitants, but the larger men-of-war and merchant's ships are anchored outside the bar, where they roll about in a distracting manner.

Occasionally the officers come on shore, but not often in the rainy season, on account of the difficulty and danger of crossing the bar, so no wonder the place is held in abhorrence by the whole navy.

An unusual number of servants are required in the African household, however small the family, on account of their incorrigible laziness, which exceeds anything I ever saw in other countries.

First in the establishment is the butler, who is a very august personage, combining in his person the characters of purveyor, housekeeper, footman, and valet. He does all the marketing, and has

whole and sole care of the cowries—the shell money of the coast.

Next to him in importance is the cook, a perfect autocrat in the kitchen, who has usually two underlings to help him. The black men are generally first rate cooks, taking a keen interest in their "art," and exciting the most languid appetite by their tempting made dishes.

Women servants are seldom kept unless there are children in the family, and the good ones are few and far between. They are even more lazy than the men, and are careless, dirty, and cold hearted.

The cowrie, or shell money, is most troublesome to a new arrival, it being next to impossible to remember how many of these minute shells go to a sixpence or a dollar.

One day soon after my arrival I wished for some change for a sovereign, and told our major domo he could bring it me in cowries. Soon after, to my astonishment, I saw the man return,

accompanied by two others, each bearing a heavy sack on his shoulder. This was my change!

For one week or so, I attempted house keeping, but gave it up in despair on account of the cowries, so our head man had everything in his hands again; much to his triumph, no doubt, as he secretly rejoiced over my discomfiture.

The climate in the dry season is not very unhealthy in Lagos. From November to the end of April fevers are rare, and I heard very little of any other illness. The scorching heat of the sun is tempered by a refreshing sea breeze, and the evenings are very pleasant.

From five to seven was my time for exercise, visiting, or sailing on the harbour, which is a beautiful sheet of water.

We had one very pleasant pic-nic to the great sandbank at the mouth of the harbour, on which the rolling waves of the Atlantic burst with such fury.

The Lagos boatmen have covered this place with offerings to their fetishes, in order to propitiate their idols when they cross the breakers.

Two poles are placed slantways in the sand, and over these a small piece of canvass is extended, forming a kind of tent. On the ground beneath are arranged the offerings, which consist of all sorts of rubbish, bits of bone, old beads, shells, scraps of crockery, and coloured rags, the poor men believing that the fetish will be pleased by such delicate attentions, and preserve their lives from the fury of the waves.

It is to be hoped that the rising generation will profit by the missionary schools now established, and become real converts to Christianity, which their fathers, as a general rule, are far from being.

There is a strange society amongst the natives, of which only men know the secret. I fancy it must be a species of free masonry, and death is the penalty of revealing its mysteries to any

woman. A painful incident occurred while I was at Lagos in connection with this society.

I was sitting in the verandah one soft, balmy evening, enjoying the cool breeze, when I suddenly was startled by the sound of hurried naked footsteps up the stairs, and on turning round saw on the landing a tall, powerful-looking black man, who immediately threw himself on his knees, bending his forehead to the ground, as the custom is when a favour is asked. At the same time a flood of passionate words poured from his lips, not one syllable of which did I understand.

My first impression was that he was mad, but on hastily summoning one of the servants who understood his dialect, I discovered that he was an unfortunate fugitive, petitioning for a night's shelter and concealment from his pursuers.

It appeared that he belonged to this mysterious society, and had, like another Samson, told his

secret to a Delilah. The fact having become known, his companions were hunting him, to put him to some cruel death, and he now implored me to protect him from their vengeance.

My husband was unfortunately absent from home at the time, so I had no one to advise me what to do, but I could not refuse the poor man a night's shelter, and I told him he could occupy one of the outhouses, until he thought the pursuit was over.

On the following morning, as I was taking my early stroll in the garden, the man again beset my path, prostrating himself as before, with every sign of abject terror in his face; I tried by signs to reassure him of his safety, and again summoned my cook to my aid, who led him away to his shed, apparently in a calmer frame of mind.

I had scarcely returned to the house, however, before I heard a great commotion in the yard, and looking out, saw the unfortunate man, with

a knife in his hand, cutting himself in every direction, while all the servants were vainly attempting to wrench it from his grasp; he seemed to have the strength and desperation of a madman, but at length he was overpowered, though not before he had inflicted on himself several severe, though not mortal wounds.

How terrible must have been the fate he dreaded from the hands of his own countrymen, when he tried to destroy himself to escape it!

Intercession was made to the native king of Lagos in his behalf, who granted him a pardon, and sent an escort to take him to a place of safety.

I believe he was smuggled out of the town at dead of night; at all events I never heard of the unhappy man again, or if he eluded the vengeance of his pursuers. I rather doubted myself the power of even the king to save him.

The native chiefs have a very poor opinion of

a woman's power of keeping a secret, and when the Alake of Abbeokuta holds a war council, no women are allowed outside their houses, an edict being proclaimed to that effect on the preceding day.

The native king of Lagos was a good tempered easy going sort of man, much given to pomp and show, but quite under English rule.

He lived in the native part of the town, in a large house called a palace, and possessed a hundred wives or so, and innumerable suits of apparel. Visitors were always regaled with champagne, whenever they went to see him, and I have heard he kept a most luxurious table.

His wives are all dressed in a particular shade of blue cotton cloth, and when they walk abroad, any man who chances to meet them, has to shade his eyes as they pass, or get out of their way as soon as possible.

I had once a good view of the king in his gala

costume. He came, with a large retinue, to pay an official visit to my husband after the return of the latter from a successful expedition, in April, 1861, against the King of Porto Novo, whose country was a very nest of slavers.

He arrived by water, and long before the first canoe came in sight round the bend of the river, we heard the din and crash of tums-tums, drums, and other noisy and discordant instruments, mingled with yells and shouts.

It was a pretty sight as canoe after canoe glided down the broad shining stream, gorgeous with many coloured umbrellas of the different chiefs.

Gold, crimson and purple flashed alternately in the burning sun, the discordant sound becoming louder and louder, and mingling strangely with the shrieks and shouts of the excited populace on the shore.

At length the king landed, walking with majestic strides under a huge umbrella of some rich material.

His dress consisted of a green, brocaded robe, reaching below his knees, Turkish trousers, and a perfect breast-plate of coral chains, hanging in thick coils from throat to waist. Surmounting all was a large plumed cocked hat, which looked strangely out of keeping with his bare heels and oriental dress.

Behind him came a troop of chiefs, all the principal ones having umbrellas held over their heads by their attendants, but they evidently had carefully abstained from outshining their king in their attire.

Most of them were simply wrapped in snow-white togas of very fine texture, flung gracefully over the shoulder, and descending to the heels.

Their number, and their swift, panther-like tread, gave me a sudden panic as I saw them enter the door, and heard their naked footsteps rushing up the stairs, and I ignominiously beat a retreat into my own room, and locked the door just as his majesty's green robe came in sight.

My room being just opposite the drawing-room, and having a large key-hole, I was enabled to have as good a view as if I had remained in the verandah, and with a greater feeling of comfort to myself.

The reception room not being large enough to hold the crowd that poured in, a number of white robed chiefs squatted down the whole length of the passage, some resting their backs against my door, thus giving me a nearer view than they imagined of their bronze faces and wild piercing eyes.

My husband, with his interpreter by his side, received the king at the door of the room, and led him with great ceremony to the sofa, which happened fortunately to be just opposite my keyhole.

After an interchange of compliments, which lasted about a quarter of an hour, as everything had to be interpreted, the king rose, salaamed profoundly, then rushed down the stairs

with the same panther-like speed with which he had ascended, his retinue flying after him helter skelter, like a troop of white-winged birds.

I must confess a delightful feeling of relief came over me as I unlocked my door and joined my husband in the verandah, when I got finely quizzed for my panic.

As the men in the canoes saw the king and his retinue emerge from the house they recommenced their distracting music louder than ever, and this continued until the winding of the river bore them and their gay umbrellas out of our sight.

On another occasion, my husband being absent from home, I had to receive a deputation from the King of Abbeokuta, who sent him a large white native cloth in token of amity and respect.

The deputation consisted of about half-a-dozen head men, each wrapped in his white toga, ac-

companied by a civilised black man, in tall and tightly-fitting clothes, who acted as their interpreter.

This man spoke such execrable English that I was obliged to send for our own interpreter in order to understand his jargon.

He told me, for instance, that the king, his master, had sent a fine white *clerk* to my husband as a token of his friendship. I therefore looked round at the group of swarthy visages and wondered what had become of the white clerk, when suddenly, at a given signal, the piece of cloth was unfurled and exhibited.

It was of the size of a large bed coverlet, and made of white cotton, beautifully interwoven with a black scroll pattern.

After this had been duly admired, the ambassadors crouched in a row along the passage, looking like a set of stone effigies, so immovable were they in that strange posture.

Their wild, gleaming eyes were never taken off

my face while the palaver was going on, but at length the interpreter hinted that a glass of spirits would not be unacceptable, so that it was ordered, and each regaled himself with what might be called a "stiff glass."

As they seemed inclined to stay longer than I thought at all necessary, I rose, and put an end to the interview, saying that I regretted I was obliged to leave them.

They took the hint, and each giving me a profound salaam, they gathered up their robes and went their way, the talkative interpreter favouring me at the last with a long speech, which was utterly incomprehensible to me, but no doubt was meant to be very complimentary.

A black man in his white toga is an interesting object, but clothed in a European coat he loses at once his native dignity of air and becomes vulgarised on the spot.

CHAPTER IV.

THE variety of races to be met with in Lagos, is very interesting to a stranger.

There is a large Mahometan Community that come principally from the north of Africa and are a fine set of men, with regular features, solemn gleaming eyes, and most majestic bearing; they always reminded me of bronze statues.

They all wear the toga, the turban, and Turkish trowser, and look additionally handsome contrasted with the negroes of the coast.

The tribes from the interior of the country are also very superior to the latter in appearance, though their hue is jet black.

Their costume is very picturesque and more showy than that of the Mahometans, consisting frequently of togas of leopard skins, and brilliant turbans of many dyes.

They are very good horsemen, regarding a saddle and bridle as superfluities; and I have seen them manage the most fiery steed with nothing but their naked heels and strong brawny arms.

The only African women that I admired were some from Tripoli, who had accompanied their lords and masters right across the interior.

They had beautifully soft dark eyes, with a timid pleading expression, sad to see; they were dressed a *l'Arabe*, and the lower part of their faces was quite concealed by the usual band of white linen.

The principal man of the party was a splendid

looking Moor, such a man as Othello might have been, about middle age, with a grizzled beard, and the features of a fine statue; he had the most dignified face imaginable, and seemed to weigh every word before he uttered it.

He seemed much interested when my husband told him he had been to the Red Sea, and asked a great many questions about the canal across the Isthmus.

The women never opened their lips, and seemed to stand in great awe of their Othello. I tried to interest them by presenting my little girl to them, but they seemed too shy to take notice of anything.

The lands of the King of Dahomey stretch down as far as the harbour of Lagos, which place he is always threatening to invade. We saw on one occasion a chief who had just come from his court, and he gave us a graphic account of the wretch and his doings.

I asked him, through the interpreter, if the

Corps of Amazons was as brave and ferocious as I had heard it described; his answer was a prolonged "Whew—" and he declared that no man could stand against these female warriors.

The system of talking through an interpreter is very tedious, and I was forcibly struck by the superior brevity of the English language over the African. A short sentence from either of us would take the interpreter several minutes to repeat, and the chief's answers, which appeared to us interminable, were given in English in a few words. This dreadful prolixity of the languages in Africa makes a visit from any of the chiefs a very tiresome affair, and one is wearied out with listening to an apparently endless flow of words, and surprised and indignant to find how easily in English the meaning could have been conveyed in a few terse sentences. But Africa is the very land of palaver. The inhabitants, I suppose,

try to compensate themselves for their want of books, by doing an immense deal of talking.

Some of the chiefs from the interior were surprised and delighted when they first saw my little girl, never having met with a white child before. Her golden hair and white skin drew forth no end of ejaculations, and they seemed to look upon her as something more than mortal.

A sad story is told of the disappearance of a little child in one of the Dutch settlements on the coast, a daughter, I believe, of one of the officials.

The child was taking a walk with her nurse in some rather lonely spot, when she was surrounded and carried off by a party of natives, and nothing was ever heard of her after fate. It is supposed she was taken to the interior, where the foot of the white man has never penetrated.

Whilst at Lagos I made the acquaintance of the Rev. Mr. Crowther, the present Bishop of Niger, and heard him preach an excellent sermon

at the English Church. He seems a truly good and clever man, and has translated a great portion of the Bible into the Yorraba language; a task of great difficulty, as the people had no written language.

I was sorry to hear that a great many of these valuable manuscripts, which had cost him years of labour, have been destroyed by the great fire which occurred in Lagos after I left the place.

The rainy season at Lagos the year I was there was ushered in by a tremendous typhoon, a most wonderful and beautiful thing to witness. We were warned of its approach by the storm signal on the west coast, a long streak of silvery whiteness seeming to rest on the horizon. The sky became inky black, and the sea was of the same murky hue, making the crested waves gleam like snow.

I stood in the verandah watching the approach of the wild wind, and was lost in awe and admiration of the beautiful sight presented by the harbour. In a moment the wind seemed to burst

from above and lash the waves into fury. They sped before the typhoon at lightning speed, in a white line of foam, and the whole sheet of water, before so dark and quiet, became violently agitated.

I was so absorbed in the beauty of the spectacle that I forgot how near the wind was upon us, when suddenly it clapped against the side of the house with a rushing sound, indescribably grand, and I found myself nearly blown off the verandah. I managed, however, to rush in at the open window in time to escape its full fury, and heard the windows being hastily shut all over the house.

In less time than I have taken to describe it the typhoon had come and gone up the river, and a deluge of rain descended, which soon had the effect of quieting the tumultuous sea.

Provisions are good and abundant in Lagos, in comparison with what they are in some parts

of the coast, but beef is almost an unknown luxury, and vegetables and fruit very scarce in the dry season; poultry, however, is plentiful, guinea-fowls especially, and the mutton, though small, has a very fine flavour.

The native cooks make very good bread, using the palm wine for leaven. The latter, when in a state of fermentation, is much drunk by the natives, and is, I have heard, a very intoxicating beverage.

The natives live almost entirely upon the cassada root, which is made into a thick gruel. I used often to see our servants all seated round a huge bowl of this stuff, on the ground, each dipping in his spoon in his turn, and apparently never tired day after day of the same fare.

We were not at all troubled in our house by insects, which surprised me greatly until I noticed the quantities of lizards about the garden. The

latter are beautiful, from their gorgeous colours. I have seen them of every shade of crimson, blue, green, and yellow, and they were so tame that they would scarcely move from my path as I approached them. They are very useful creatures, as they devour every species of insect, and are perfectly harmless themselves, so I took them under my especial protection.

After the typhoon, the rains commenced in Lagos, but did not fairly set in till the end of May. From that time till November, the passage from the harbour is a most dangerous one; many lives are lost each season in going to and from the ships, and the offerings to the fetish become very numerous.

I was obliged, however, to cross this terrible bar in the month of June, when I returned to England, but the Commander of the small gun-boat in the harbour assured me his vessel could make the venture with perfect safety; and having offered to take me outside, I preferred to

cross the breakers in her, to the certain risk of an open boat.

On the 10th of June, I embarked with my little girl and her nurse. The sun shone brilliantly through the wild drifting clouds, and we saw distinctly the long line of breakers through which we must pass to reach the Mail Steamer.

It was a time of intense anxiety as we neared that angry bar, especially as the poor old gun-boat refused to answer her helm, trembling and shivering at each shock, and sometimes seeming to stand still.

The people on board the Mail Steamer were meanwhile watching us through their telescopes, expecting every instant that the vessel would be swallowed up in that sea of foam. Hope had, indeed, faded from every face on deck, and our doom seemed inevitable, when the little vessel, as if guided by an Unseen Hand, more powerful than man's, rushed with a sudden

impetus into smooth water, and we were safe.

The passage is so narrow mid-way, that the slightest deviation from the course places the ship in the greatest peril; the breakers gleam and rage on every side, and the waves seem eager for their prey. The water also swarms with sharks, so that even the best swimmer has little chance of life in case of being shipwrecked.

Since Lagos has become a British possession, I have heard that great improvements have been made. The streets are widened, and many new houses built ; but nothing can alter its deadly climate, fit only for the black race to live in, though not worse, I believe, than Sierra Leone, and Cape Coast.

The curse bestowed on Ham seems to cling to his country, fertile and beautiful as it is in many parts, and wherever white men settle in it,

there hangs perpetually the dark shadow of death.

The air is full of farewells to the dying and mournings for the dead. The whole land rings with tales of bloodshed, oppression, and wickedness of every kind, and as long as the native rulers are uncivilized and unchristianized, slavery will never cease. The natives consider exchanging men for goods a perfectly fair sort of barter, and in war the victorious party make slaves of their prisoners as a legitimate part of their success. The love of enslaving his fellow beings is also so innate in man, that even freed slaves, if they get on in this world, spend their first spare money in buying a slave. Though the exportation of these unhappy beings may be checked by the continued efforts of other countries, slavery will, I fear, still exist in Africa in a worse form than was ever known in America or in the West Indies, until the civiliz-

ing influence of Christianity has extended itself over those melancholy tracts of land, where life seems, at the best, to be so sternly devoid of that grace which some would call poetry, but which is, in truth, the higher form of such happiness as the Creator intended for His people on earth.



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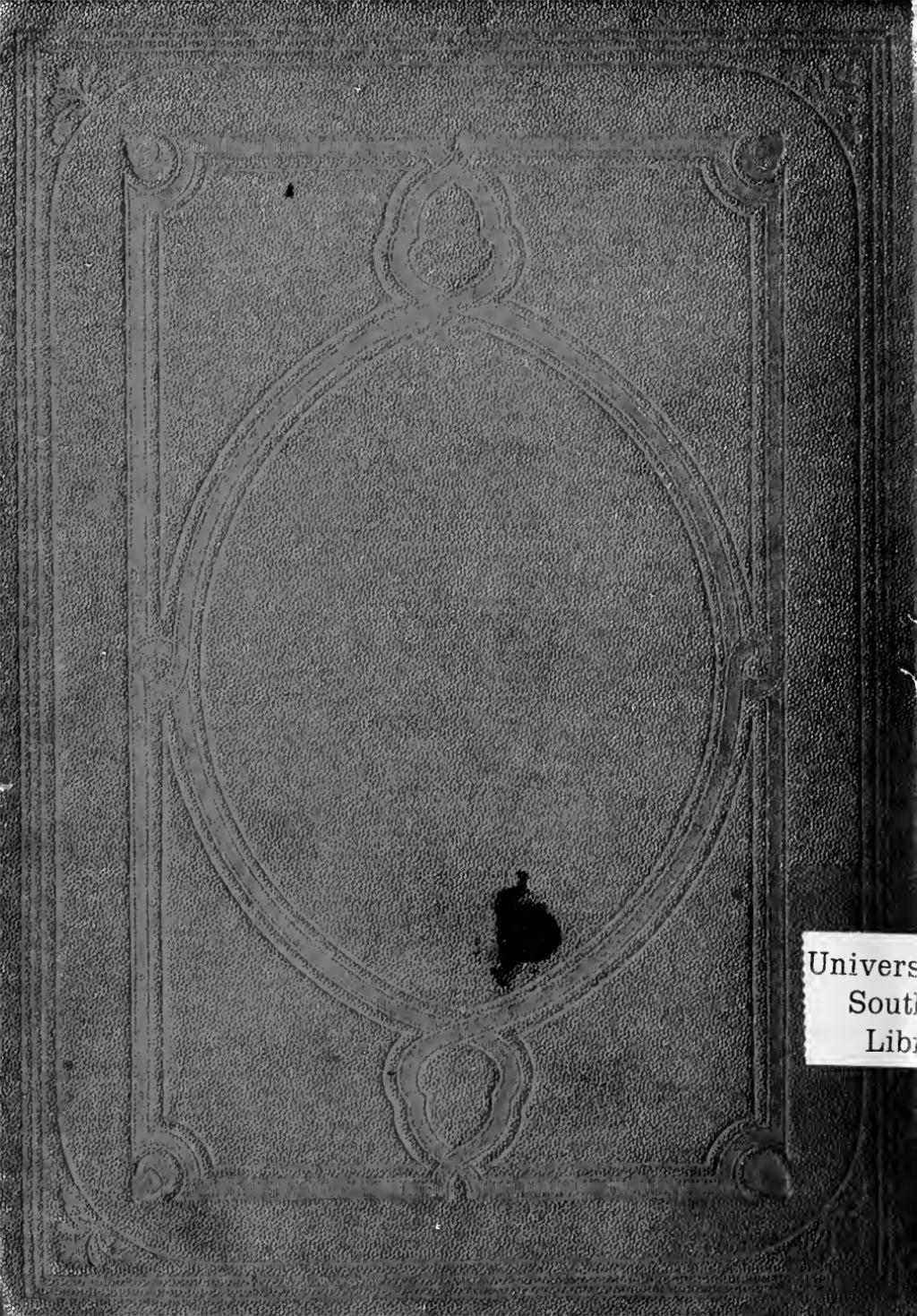
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